


DEMS TRY POPULISM ■ **HOW TO STOP GAY MARRIAGE**

JANUARY 31, 2005

# The American Conservative



**BOEING...  
BOEING...  
GONE**

**Outsourced to Death**

**Taki: God and Man at Gstaad**  
**What the Wounded Will Remember**  
**Politically Incorrect American History**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG  
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

## LEAVE NO MAN BEHIND

William R. Polk's sensible "A Time for Leaving" (Jan. 17) sidesteps—perhaps intentionally—the issue of whether American military bases should go or stay in any withdrawal scheme.

If the bases stay, Iraq, it could be said, would be joining the existing family of nations that for whatever reasons are already hosting U.S. bases. But consider for a moment those few countries that do not want foreign bases on their soil, friendly or otherwise—the Philippines, France, the U.S. itself, Iraq of course. To paraphrase Charles de Gaulle: allowing a foreign military presence on one's soil is to diminish the sovereignty of that soil. Is that so strange?

A complete withdrawal and nothing less would seem the wise thing to do, especially when one is not wanted. Given, however, the American proclivity for global base-building that has been on the march since World War II, including an unprecedented presence now on former USSR soil (not to mention Afghanistan), a complete military withdrawal from Iraq seems highly unlikely. For that reason, I'm afraid, there will be further carnage.

HARRY WILLIAMS  
*Washington, D.C.*

## FRONT ROW SEAT

As a soldier who has just returned from Iraq, serving in Civil Affairs, I found Mr. Polk's brilliant article to be superbly accurate and well researched. Thank you.

AL LORENTZ  
*via e-mail*

## SEEING RED

Peter Wood's article (Dec. 20) about the supposed need for teachers to grade student papers with purple ink instead of red both amused me and gave me an eerie sense of *deja vu*.

Back in the early '90s, while serving as a counselor at a summer camp in the San Bernardino National Forest, I met a fellow counselor who had just returned

from a missions trip to Nigeria. As you can imagine, he had many interesting cross-cultural anecdotes to relate. As a teacher myself, I was most fascinated by his revelation that Nigerians consider red ink to be the most insulting color one can use on paper. Apparently, this taboo was brought to his attention the hard way, after he had just finished grading and returning a stack of student papers. He was unable to get anyone to explain to him the rationale for this attitude; it seemed to be something that everyone just knew without being told.

He also told me that the Nigerians are in the habit of discarding or destroying any shipments of yellow corn (maize) that they receive because they only consider white corn to be fit for human consumption.

CLIFF BRAND  
*Denair, Calif.*

## VIVE LA FRANCE

With regard to Robert Paxton's "French Lessons," *National Review* lost all credibility when they started hawking what I call "tabloid conservatism." For a Western conservative to declare the French our enemy on the one hand, while on the other trumping up Allawi and the Iraqis as steadfast allies of freedom is just too much. Who do they think we are fighting if not Iraqis in Iraq? I only saw one Frenchman in my 12 months in Iraq, and he was a cameraman.

OMID ZEHTAB  
*via e-mail*

## GRAND COALITION

Thank you for publishing the article by Scott McConnell (Dec. 20) on the misgivings that many lifelong Republicans have with neocon foreign policy. I am a middle-of-the-road Democrat and do not consider myself a wild-eyed liberal on issues of foreign policy. Those of your readers who have strongly supported the foreign policies of recent Republican presidents (especially Nixon and the elder Bush) will find much more common ground with people like me

than they will with Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, and the other madmen running the show these days.

I am glad to see that the traditional Republican Party still lives in some circles, even if it is a bit hidden from prominent public view. If, however, you do not speak out forcefully, as in Mr. McConnell's piece, then you will bear responsibility for the disastrous consequences that await.

STUART DRYER  
*Houston, Texas*

## CAN 60 MILLION BE WRONG?

I am rather disturbed by Scott McConnell's "Realists Rebuffed." I am a conservative Republican, and I find it very troubling to have Mr. McConnell repeating the same liberal propaganda that is the staple of the mainstream news media and its attempts to rewrite the history of the conflict in Iraq. In fact, reading through his article, I had to stop and check that I hadn't accidentally clicked on something from the *New York Times*.

If you want to attack neocons and the Bush administration, then do so. However, have the courtesy and integrity to use some real arguments and real facts rather than recycled liberal news media attacks. That Rumsfeld was responsible for Abu Ghraib and Hadley is somehow a villain because of the State of the Union passage about Iraq trying to buy yellowcake is taken as gospel by the *New York Times*, but many, many people do not agree. Sixty million votes for George W. Bush is a substantial mandate; one could even characterize it as a landslide.

ROY FENN  
*via e-mail*

---

*The American Conservative* welcomes letters to the editor. Submit by e-mail to [letters@amconmag.com](mailto:letters@amconmag.com), by fax to 703-875-3350, or by mail to 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA 22209. Please include your name, address, and phone number. We reserve the right to edit all correspondence for space and clarity.



REUTERS PHOTO ARCHIVE

[COVER]

## Boeing, Boeing ... Gone

BY EAMONN FINGLETON How an aerospace titan traded away its technological edge **Page 7**

[CULTURE]

## Pleading the Fourteenth

BY AUSTIN BRAMWELL Congress already holds the power to define marriage. **Page 13**

[POLITICS]

## The People's Party

BY W. JAMES ANTLE III: Democratic populists make a play for red state voters. **Page 15**

[IDEAS]

## Democracy for Everyone?

BY JAMES L. PAYNE Where political violence reigns, freedom is an unlikely prospect. **Page 18**

### COLUMNS

**6 Patrick J. Buchanan:** The proof of Bush's presidency will be in his second term.

**35 Taki:** God and Man at Gstaad

### NEWS & VIEWS

**4 Fourteen Days:** Tsunami Relief; GOP Immigration Wedge; Democrats Rethink Abortion

**25 Deep Background:** Scaring Syria Straight; Return of the Drones

### ARTICLES

**21 Fred Reed:** Old soldiers don't fade away.

**23 Paul Gottfried:** Muslim immigration puts Europe's nationalist parties on the electoral map.

### ARTS & LETTERS

**27 Steve Sailer:** Clint Eastwood's "Million Dollar Baby"

**28 Albert S. Lindemann:** *The Jewish Century* by Yuri Slezkine

**31 Roger D. McGrath:** *The Politically Incorrect Guide to American History* by Thomas E. Woods Jr.

**33 Ilana Mercer:** *Liberty and Freedom: A Visual History of America's Founding Ideas* by David Hackett Fischer

[WORLD]

## TSUNAMI RELIEF

The United States is not only a powerful country but a good one—though not since the era of the Vietnam War have so many Americans (and so many others in the world) needed reminding of that fact. We are grateful to be able to help those devastated by the tsunami disaster and thankful to see American knowledge and power being used to save lives.

It is perhaps inevitable that the Iraq War colors much of the world's perception of America today. Though the Bush administration still claims that the occupation advances lofty ideals, our response to the tsunami shows what a benevolent projection of power really looks like.

Iraq doesn't stand for the whole of America, and indeed much less of it than many anti-Americans would like. The massive outpouring of private American donations for the tsunami victims and the effective work by civilian and military relief teams show a better and truer side of the country. Would that the images of American helicopters bringing food and medicine could erase the memory of American might deployed in the service of an ideological fantasy.

[POSTWAR]

## WAR GAMES IN A POTESKIN VILLAGE

If the Cakewalk Crowd needs further evidence that Iraq isn't exactly easing into their utopian designs, they might take a field trip to any of eight mobilization stations where U.S. troops are preparing for deployment. (They needn't worry that such a venture would take them anywhere near the active combat for which they have such demonstrable aversion. They can get back to their think tanks before lift off.)

From Louisiana's Fort Polk to California's Fort Irvine, at a cost of \$15 million, the Army is employing 1,000 Arabic



speakers to acclimate American soldiers to Iraqi culture by populating mock villages. A lucky few get to play "friendly mayors" or "welcoming townspeople," but the Army isn't going to all this trouble to showcase local hospitality. Many more are instructed to scream insults at their would-be liberators—"Criminal, get out of my country. ... You're killing people"—for despite a few "friendly mayors" that is the Iraq we've broken and bought. Flower throwers need not apply.

[IMMIGRATION]

## DEAD RIGHT—FOR ONCE

*National Review*, after a bit of a respite, has rediscovered the immigration issue. The author of the Dec. 31 cover story on the threat open borders pose to the Republican Party is none other than David Frum.

So let's give the devil his due. He accurately describes Bush's guest-worker program as something that will divide the GOP. In fact, he likens the effect of immigration politics in 2005 on Republicans to that of crime and abortion on Democrats in years past—"a vulnerable point at which a strong-minded opponent could drive a wedge that would shatter" the party. This is indisputably true. Leading congressional Republi-

cans, such as House Judiciary Chairman James Sensenbrenner and House terrorism subcommittee Chairman Elton Gallegly, are in open revolt against the Bush plan. While Frum stops short of endorsing immigration reduction, he recognizes that a wanton expansion of cheap foreign labor would be disastrous.

If the consequences of amnesty are obvious even to the most Bush-boosting pundits, why can't Karl Rove see them?

[RIP]

## CHIC RADICAL

When news broke of Susan Sontag's death at 71, liberals rushed to lionize her as one of the nation's greatest intellectuals—"icon of the questing mind" cooed *Time* magazine. Conservatives will remember her differently, as a pioneer of the far frontier of political correctness. In a 1967 *Partisan Review* rant, she argued, "America was founded on a genocide. ... The white race is the cancer of human history."

To Sontag, "Mozart, Pascal, Boolean algebra, Shakespeare, parliamentary government, baroque churches, Newton, the emancipation of women" all failed to "redeem what this particular civilization has wrought upon the world." Hers wasn't ordinary reverse racism born before its time but an utter rejection of



Western culture. Where academic multiculturalism began as a sincere appreciation of other civilizations, it fast turned into an attack on the Western tradition with foreign culture as a convenient weapon. And Sontag gleefully led the charge.

Though obituaries seated her alongside Norman Mailer and Gore Vidal in the literary hall of heroes, Tom Wolfe dismissed the activist turned novelist as “just another scribbler who spent her life signing up for protest meetings and lumbering to the podium encumbered by her prose style.” But Susan Sontag will be remembered—if only for popularizing disdain for the civilization and intellectual tradition that made her achievements possible.

#### [CULTURE]

### LIFE SUPPORT

This year marks the 32nd anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*. It also, if present trends continue, may be the year the Democratic Party rethinks its fealty to the abortion-rights lobby.

The Senate Democratic caucus will be led by Harry Reid, who is pro-life. Another pro-lifer, former Congressman Tim Roemer, launched a serious bid for the Democratic National Committee chairmanship. Such pro-choice stalwarts as House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi gave him encouragement.

Pelosi is not alone. *Newsweek* reported that John Kerry told a Democratic gathering following his defeat that their party needed to make clear that it didn't view abortion as a positive good and should be more open to candidates who dissent from pro-choice orthodoxy.

It will take more than a few conciliatory speeches and token pro-lifers to change the Democrats' image—they acquired the “acid, amnesty, and abortion” tag in 1972, despite the presence of pro-life Sargent Shriver on the national ticket. The party will have to show a real

willingness to compromise on legislation where there is wide agreement, such as parental-notification laws and restrictions on late-term abortions. But if these overtures are sincere, it is good news not just for pro-lifers but everyone who would like to see abortion policy more closely reflect the sensibilities of the American people.

#### [JUSTICE]

### ON THE DOCKET

File-sharing, marijuana, and the rights of beef producers—no, it's not a late-night bull session at an agricultural college, it's the Supreme Court's docket for 2005. The new year brings an ailing William Rehnquist and his colleagues controversies both well-worn (Title IX, the death penalty) and spanking new (FCC authority over cable internet service).

Of special note is a trio of immigration cases. *Jama v. INS* will establish whether the U.S. can deport an alien to a country that has not agreed to accept him back—in this instance because the country in question, Somalia, has no government. The consolidated cases *Crawford v. Martinez* and *Benitz v. Wallis*, meanwhile, ask whether aliens convicted of crimes can be held indefinitely while awaiting deportation. Martinez and Benitz are Cubans who came to America in the Mariel boatlift.

As ever, some basic rights are at stake this year. The beef producers' cases involve a free-speech claim against the government compelling farmers to subsidize an industry advertising campaign. Property rights are at issue in *Kelo v. City of New London*, an eminent-domain case in which seven property owners are suing New London, Conn., to prevent the city from condemning their homes to make way for economic redevelopment. The case brings together a coalition in support of the homeowners that ranges from the Cato Institute to the NAACP and the Farm Bureau. ■

## The American Conservative

#### Editors

**Patrick J. Buchanan**  
**Taki Theodoracopulos**

#### Executive Editor

**Scott McConnell**

#### Managing Editor

**Kara Hopkins**

#### Assistant Editors

**W. James Antle III**  
**Daniel McCarthy**

#### Art Director

**Mark Graef**

#### Film Critic

**Steve Sailer**

#### Office Manager

**Veronica Yanos**

#### Publishing Consultant

**Ronald E. Burr**

#### Contributing Editors

**Doug Bandow, Richard Cummings, Michael Desch,**  
**Philip Giraldi, Paul Gottfried, Leon Hadar,**  
**Peter Hitchens, Christopher Layne, Eric S. Margolis,**  
**Justin Raimondo, Fred Reed, R.J. Stove, John Zmirak**

*The American Conservative*, Vol. 4, No. 2, January 31, 2005 (ISSN 1540-966X). Reg. U.S. Pat. & Tm. Off. TAC is published 24 times per year, biweekly (except for January and August) for \$49.97 per year by The American Conservative, LLC, 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA, 22209. Periodicals postage paid at Arlington, VA, and additional mailing offices. Printed in the United States of America. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The American Conservative*, P.O. Box 9030, Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030.

Subscription rates: \$49.97 per year (24 issues) in the U.S., \$54.97 in Canada (U.S. funds), and \$69.97 other foreign (U.S. funds). Back issues: \$6.00 (prepaid) per copy in USA, \$7.00 in Canada (U.S. funds).

**For subscription orders, payments, and other subscription inquiries—**

By phone: **800-579-6148**

(outside the U.S./Canada 856-488-5321)

Via Web: [www.amconmag.com](http://www.amconmag.com)

By mail: *The American Conservative*, P.O. Box 9030, Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030

When ordering a subscription please allow 4–6 weeks for delivery of your first issue and all subscription transactions.

Inquiries and letters the editor should be sent to [letters@amconmag.com](mailto:letters@amconmag.com). For advertising sales/editorial call 703-875-7600.

For reprints and permissions, please contact Valeo IP at 800-217-7874 or [support@ValeoIP.com](mailto:support@ValeoIP.com).

This issue went to press on January 6, 2005.  
Copyright 2005 *The American Conservative*.

## Second-Term Test

Undeniably, it was a good year for *Time's* Man of the Year. For the second election in a row, George W. Bush increased his party's strength in Congress as he secured

the second term his father failed to win.

Not since FDR has a new president done so well by his party. But here the comparisons end. Where FDR carried every state but Maine and Vermont in his re-election campaign in 1936, and Ike carried every state but Missouri and a few Dixiecrat bastions in 1956, and Nixon and Reagan carried 49 states, George W. Bush won only 31. His margin was 3 percent.

An historic victory this was not. No wartime president had ever been turned out of office. But Bush came closest. A turnaround of 60,000 votes in Ohio, and he would have lost to a liberal from Massachusetts with a voting record indistinguishable from Teddy Kennedy's.

I have political capital in the bank and I intend to spend it, says the president. But that capital is shrinking as fast as the dollar.

What, then, are the yardsticks of success for a second Bush term?

On the "moral values" front, there is but one test. Can he, will he, reshape the Supreme Court and ring down the curtain on the revolution it has been imposing upon this country, illegitimately, for 50 years? If he succeeds here, President Bush will have achieved what Ike, Nixon, Ford, Reagan, and his father all failed to do—together.

As for the Bush guest-worker plan for illegal aliens, it is in trouble in the House, as he is condemned in his own party for refusing to secure America's borders. One major terror attack by an alien who sneaked across the Mexican

border, and the president will lose the terrorism issue for the balance of his term.

Bush's trade policy cost America 2.7 million manufacturing jobs in his first term. With the Multifiber Agreement expiring, the imminent loss of hundreds of thousands of textile and apparel jobs will create a crisis for free-trade Republicans. Yet to the deindustrialization of America, Bush has no answer other than "I believe free trade is good for America." This is mindless ideology.

Arthur Laffer and Lawrence Kudlow may see a trade deficit of \$600 billion and a sinking dollar as signs the world loves America as a place to invest. But the financial world dissents, as does Steve Forbes, who sees the soaring price of gold, oil, copper and other commodities, and housing, as fire bells of inflation.

After having turned a \$200 billion Clinton surplus into a \$400 billion deficit, the president, prodded by his own deficit hawks, is going to have to perform fiscal surgery. He is going to have to address the Social Security and Medicare deficits. Neither will be popular, and the president is already below 50 percent approval again.

Only one in nine economists predicts a recession in 2005, and two of nine by the end of 2006. This points to clear sailing for the economy, but the political question remains: will working America share equitably in Wall Street's prosperity?

It is in foreign policy, however, that the president has been hailed as a revo-

lutionary for his Bush Doctrine of preventive war and his Wilsonian declaration of a "world democratic revolution." And it is here that his presidency will be made or broken.

Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and North Korea are the proving grounds of the Bush Doctrine. While Afghanistan just held its first national election, the country also appears on the way to becoming a narco-democracy, the world supplier of the raw material for heroin, as it was before the Taliban eradicated the drug trade.

North Korea appears to have successfully defied the president and crashed the club of nuclear nations. Iran has begun to take steps toward the threshold. Yet the Bush Doctrine, which calls for preventive wars and "regime change" for axis-of-evil nations that defy America's will, has yet to be applied. To the dismay of neoconservatives, the Big Stick remains in the closet.

Ultimately, the success or failure of the Bush foreign policy, the Bush Doctrine, the "world democratic revolution," comes down to Iraq. The price in dead and wounded, American and Iraqi, in divisions within this country and with our allies, in the anger and alienation of the Arab and Islamic street, is already high and rising.

If January's elections produce an Iraq that looks to America as a friend and ally and offers a model democracy for the Arab world, Bush's war will be judged a success. But if the Sunni insurgency tears Iraq apart in chaos and civil war, leading to a U.S. withdrawal, or a second Vietnam, Bush's fate is sealed. He will have launched a war of choice, not necessity, and lost it, something no other president has ever done. ■

[plane truth]

# Boeing, Boeing ... Gone

How an American titan clipped its own wings

By Eamonn Fingleton

ONE EVENING A GENERATION AGO, several up-and-coming aerospace executives gathered to commune with the Boeing aircraft company's chief executive, Thornton Wilson. The discussion turned to Boeing's vaunted expertise in making aircraft wings. Wilson evidently came across as boastful—so much so that a young General Electric executive named Harry Stonecipher suggested that Boeing was arrogant. “And rightly so,” came Wilson's serene reply.

The exchange, which was recorded in *Fortune* magazine a few years ago, is worth recalling partly for what has happened to Stonecipher in the meantime—and partly for what has happened to Boeing.

In a remarkable twist of fate, Stonecipher now fills Wilson's old job at Boeing. But whereas the Boeing that Wilson led in the 1970s utterly dominated the skies, today's Boeing is another matter. Its once masterful technological leadership is gone and, in an orgy of indiscriminate outsourcing, Stonecipher is presiding over the destruction of what remains of Boeing's erstwhile manufacturing greatness—not least the world-beating wing business that was the apple of Wilson's eye.

As the American press has latterly come to realize, Boeing is an embattled company. But while the media has focused on a defense contracting scan-

dal that has recently engulfed the company, this is a tempest in a teacup compared to the real story: the unpublicized tragedy of Boeing's declining competitiveness. After decades of shortsighted management, Boeing has become so hollowed out that the impact is clearly visible in America's rapidly worsening trade deficits. Indeed, respected experts fear Boeing is already so enfeebled that it may be forced to exit its core business in commercial airliners within a decade. This in turn would undermine its defense business, with distinctly ominous implications for America's long-term security. Just how important that business is can be judged from the fact that, after decades of industry consolidation, the Boeing group now subsumes most of the contractors that executed the Apollo moon project.

Part of the problem is that Airbus, a puny also-ran in Wilson's time, has recently leapfrogged to global leadership in airliner sales. But a larger part is a sea change in Boeing's concept of itself. In a philosophical metamorphosis whose significance has been lost on the American press, Boeing is now pleased to call itself a “systems integrator.” An unfortunate echo of the New Economy bubble, this self-description effectively reduces America's most Olympian manufacturer to the level of a thousand catch-as-catch-can soft-

ware consultancies. Boeing's top management has presided over one of the most lamentable downsizing programs in American corporate history. Not only has the Boeing group cut 77,000 jobs in the last seven years, but it has euthanized its research and development department—all this while spending \$10 billion to “enhance shareholder value” in a buy-back of one-sixth of its outstanding stock.

The key to the new Boeing is a Faustian bargain with Japan. In a rerun of earlier American industrial implosions, Boeing has come to rely more and more on Japanese contractors for its most advanced engineering and manufacturing. Heavily subsidized by the Tokyo government, Boeing's Japanese partners are delighted to lowball their contract prices and spend heavily on the sort of advanced research and development that in happier times Boeing would have eagerly—indeed jealously—reserved for itself.

All this powerfully props up Boeing's short-term profits. But what's in it for Japan? Plenty. Not only have Boeing's orders long kept Japanese factories nicely ticking, but recently, in a stunning move that has hitherto gone virtually unnoticed in the United States, Tokyo has prevailed on Boeing to transfer large quantities of previously secret American aerospace know-how to a government-

funded Japanese aerospace consortium. Adding salt to the American economy's wounds is that much of this expertise was built with help from U.S. taxpayers.

In effect, Boeing is burning the family heirlooms to keep the house warm. First into the fire went some throwaway items from the attic, quickly followed by the Empire chaise and the Chippendale chairs. Now if labor union officials are to be believed, Boeing is torching the Vermeers and Canalettos, despite the fact that many of these are held in trust for an absent relative—an agreeable bagholder by the name of Uncle Sam.

Boeing's deeply embittered engineers prefer an even more controversial—if distinctly vulgar—metaphor. Outraged at the prone position they have been asked to adopt towards their information-gathering Japanese counterparts, they have been quoted by author Karl Sabbagh as referring to Boeing's technology-transfer deal with Japan as the “open kimono” policy. The erstwhile titan of the American aerospace industry is, of course, the one in the kimono.

Just how far Boeing has fallen will be extensively documented later this year when the aerospace experts David Pritchard and Alan MacPherson publish a scholarly analysis of Boeing's “systems integration” policy. Their paper, which is being reviewed for publication by the UK-based journal *R&D Management*, is likely to cause a firestorm in Washington. Here, based on an advance look at the draft, are some of their findings:

- More of the 7E7, Boeing's major new plane due for launch in 2008, will probably be built in Japan than in the United States.
- In total, nearly 70 percent of the 7E7's manufacturing content will come from foreign sources. This compares with foreign content of just 2 percent in the Boeing 727, which was launched in the 1960s.

- The Boeing 777—the most advanced Boeing so far launched—contains about 30 percent foreign content. There is no domestic production for the plane's center wing box or its aft and forward fuselage sections.

- Boeing's product line is rapidly aging and its backlogs are low—a signal that further precipitous drops in output are ahead. Production on four of its six commercial product lines (the 747, the 757, the 767, and the 717) is likely to cease within the next few years. This would leave only the 737 and 777 in production until the 7E7 comes on line.

- Boeing spent a mere 3.5 percent of its revenues on research and development in 2003. By comparison, Airbus spent 9.5 percent. Boeing allocated only 1 percent of its 2003 revenues to capital investment, compared to Airbus's 9.1 percent.

- Boeing's technology transfers to Japan include vital new-materials know-how acquired in long-running joint research programs with NASA. The materials concerned are composites used in both wings and fuselage.

- Boeing has become so hollowed out that its sales should no longer qualify for lucrative federal export incentives such as Ex-Im Bank loans and foreign sales corporation tax status.

As Pritchard and MacPherson point out, a particularly telling indicator of Boeing's decline is that the Japanese will make most of the wings for the 7E7. Not only that, Boeing seems set to transfer wing-making know-how to a Japanese-government-sponsored consortium.

In outsourcing the 7E7's wings, Boeing is crossing an economic Rubicon. Apart from the Boeing 717, which was not a true-born Boeing, no Boeing plane has ever flown on foreign wings.

(The 717 is a souped-up DC9, and its presence in the Boeing catalog reflects Boeing's takeover of McDonnell Douglas in 1997. McDonnell Douglas, it should be added, pioneered many of the eat-the-seed-corn tactics Boeing has now embraced.)

In the past, Boeing always maintained a tight grip on the wing-making process. Whereas in the 1980s and 1990s it let Japan make an increasing array of wing subcomponents, these were merely assorted “widgets” churned out to Boeing designs. Now a Japanese aerospace consortium will have design control and will make its own decisions about which contractors and subcontractors make the myriad widgets. If past is prologue, Boeing will never again regain control of wing-making. For one thing, the Japanese suppliers will have the advantage henceforth of more modern tools and a generally more advanced understanding of the technology.

It is hard to exaggerate the significance of all this. As was obvious to Thornton Wilson all those years ago, Boeing's erstwhile global dominance in jet planes was founded on its wing-making secrets. Indeed, when Japanese contractors began to take on an increasingly important role in making aircraft components in the 1980s, Boeing instituted elaborate procedures to control the movements of visiting Japanese engineers at its offices and factories. As Louis Uchitelle of the *New York Times* recorded in 1989, Boeing's prime concern was to hide its wing-making secrets from industrial spies.

In truth, the challenges entailed in designing and making wings for large passenger jets are far more daunting than lay observers might imagine. The challenge is to make the final design both strong and light, a delicate balancing act that is not made any easier by a further requirement: everything must be machined to tolerances measured in



thousandths of an inch. The slightest dimensional error can produce disproportionate aeronautical consequences. Just how disproportionate can be gauged from a well-known law of aeronautics: air resistance increases with the square of an object's speed. Thus the resistance encountered at 500 miles per hour is fully 100 times greater than at 50 miles per hour.

It is therefore hardly overstating things to say that the wings are to a plane what the sound box is to a violin—its defining feature. Just as a violin is not a Stradivarius without a sound box made in Cremona by Antonio Stradivari, a plane can hardly be considered a Boeing without wings made in the United States by the Boeing company.

Perhaps the best indicator of the challenges involved in making wings for large passenger jets is that, apart from the United States, only one nation, Britain, boasts a serious record in the field. British Aerospace's wing-making capability is one of Britain's few remaining world-class manufacturing businesses. Its technology, in turn, has been a key driver of the success of Airbus, which is backed by the governments of France, Germany, Spain, and, of course, Britain.

Wing-making is one of the most advanced sub-sectors of one of the world's most advanced manufacturing industries. But since the United States has been in general retreat from advanced manufacturing for three decades, why should we care what happens to what remains of America's manufacturing heritage? Manufacturing matters for three key reasons:

1. Manufacturing jobs generally provide better wages than equivalent service jobs because worker productivity is generally leveraged by more capital and more proprietary know-how.

2. Manufacturing provides an abundance of jobs for people of ordinary ability as opposed to the Ph.D. types who get many of the jobs at, say, Microsoft. It thus closely matches the job-creation needs of society.

3. Manufacturing companies are big exporters. In my book, *In Praise of Hard Industries*, I calculated that per unit of output American manufacturing businesses export about eleven times as much as service businesses.

Few manufacturing businesses score better on these three criteria than the airliner industry. Even if it were not so closely intertwined with America's national defense, the industry would still be of pivotal geopolitical importance. The point is that it has long been America's biggest export earner. Unfortunately, America's imports of aircraft and aircraft parts now equal 45 percent of its exports, up from just 5 percent in the 1960s.

Boeing's resort to outsourcing explains much of the increase—and it comes at a time when Americans are rediscovering the importance of trade. For a while in the 1990s, it became fashionable to say that “the trade deficits don't matter” and that the U.S. could with impunity allow its export industries to die on the vine, but this is now becoming widely recognized as a self-serving canard of the foreign-trade lobby. Certainly the Bush administration can hardly feel secure in the knowledge that the only thing standing between the dollar and total collapse is a massive support operation by the Japanese and Chinese.

As Jack Davis, a prominent advocate of an American manufacturing revival, points out, the ramifications of Boeing's decline extend beyond aerospace. “We're not just losing the airliner industry, but all the scientific, engineering and technological know-how that goes with it,” says Davis. “We are talking here about

advanced composites, glass, aluminum, titanium materials technology, the castings and foundry industries, precision tooling and machining, not to mention avionics. And since these technologies are used in jet fighters, bombers, tankers and space vehicles, we're hitting the defense industry as well as the commercial aerospace industry.”

The most devastating aspect of Boeing's implosion is what it says about America's overall economic strategy. A principal element of that strategy has been free trade. And for proponents of free trade, Boeing has long been Exhibit A—supposedly unimpeachable evidence that advanced American manufacturers have little to fear and much to gain from the globalists' New World Order.

When some of us in the 1980s and 1990s warned that “one-way free trade” was gutting American manufacturing, we were dismissed as Chicken Littles. American manufacturing was not declining, we were told, but rather triumphantly reinventing itself. Free trade might sweep away inefficient, low-tech manufacturers—“buggy-whip makers” in our opponents' favored terminology—but America was going from strength to strength in more advanced industries such as aerospace. And true enough, all through the 1980s when the alleged buggy-whip makers—companies like Zenith, Xerox, and Chrysler—fell like ninepins before foreign competition, Boeing seemed like a gratifying exception—to anyone who did not look too closely. As late as 1990, *Newsweek* described concern about Japan's targeting of various aerospace technologies as “overwrought” and opined that America enjoyed “a lead over Japan that would be difficult to squander.”

Of course, as far as Boeing is concerned there is no problem. It paints its downsizing not only as inevitable but as a good thing. Unfortunately its excuses are, for the most part, transparent nonsense.

Start with the notion that it is now a “systems integrator.” To those who can’t see through business jargon, a “systems integrator” may sound more impressive than a mere manufacturer. In reality, it is a cop-out, as a glance at some of the industry’s other systems integrators makes clear. Embraer of Brazil is a systems integrator. So is Aviation Industries of China. Like the new Boeing, these companies lack the advanced know-how and machinery to make key components in a modern first-world plane. Instead they must import such components from more advanced manufacturers in Japan and Europe.

Boeing’s outsourcing is often excused as merely reflecting a desire to have routine, low-skilled work done cheaply in low-wage countries. This might make sense if Boeing were moving jobs mainly to India or Bangladesh. In reality, an estimated 50 percent of Boeing’s foreign-sourced work is done in Japan. While in the 1970s and 1980s companies like Zenith and Xerox had some excuse for going to Japan, any shift of American work to Japan now seems like an admission of managerial failure. Measured against the dollar, the yen today stands at more than two-and-a-half times its level of 1985. Once a cheap-labor country, Japan today ranks virtually at the top of the world wages table with wage rates between 10 and 30 percent higher than in the United States. Boeing’s decision to buy more and more from Japan is therefore the economic equivalent of water running uphill.

The plot thickens when you realize that foreign outsourcing has not always been a factor in the American aircraft industry. In fact, in the 1950s, the heyday of America’s domination of the skies, American planes were made virtually in their entirety with American labor, despite the fact that American wages were then six times those in Japan and four times those in Germany.

Boeing’s first experiment with foreign contracting came in the 1970s when, in a *quid pro quo* for plane purchases by a government-owned Japanese airline, Boeing undertook to buy some Japanese-made components. Similar side deals—known as “offsets”—were soon concluded with other industrially ambitious nations.

Although the early offset deals were small, they proved to be the thin end of a rather thick wedge. By the 1980s, the Japanese alone were making 15 percent of the Boeing 767, and that is modest compared to the plans for the 7E7. Japanese manufacturers are officially expected to make 35 percent of the plane, but unofficial estimates put their

1970s, when Boeing’s once flourishing roster of American suppliers began to lose orders. One by one such component makers as Avco, Convair, Douglas, Fairchild, Grumman, Lockheed Martin, Northrop, and Rockwell have since been forced to exit the passenger jet business or have even had to shut down entirely. The roster was down to just two as of 2003, compared to ten in the 1970s.

Boeing argues that large offsets have often been essential in capturing lucrative export orders over the years. But this is contradicted by Airbus’s record. While consistently stonewalling the more damaging requests for offsets, Airbus has nonetheless thrived. As Pritchard and MacPherson point out,

IN THE 1950S **AMERICAN PLANES** WERE MADE VIRTUALLY IN THEIR ENTIRETY WITH **AMERICAN LABOR**, DESPITE THE FACT THAT **U.S. WAGES** WERE THEN SIX TIMES THOSE IN JAPAN AND FOUR TIMES THOSE IN GERMANY.

share far higher because in addition to delivering huge fully assembled sections, the Japanese will supply many of the subcomponents needed by Boeing’s American and Italian suppliers. An exact calculation is impossible because an undisclosed proportion of the work will be conducted abroad by Boeing itself (in Boeing-owned factories in Canada and Australia), but Pritchard and MacPherson are probably erring on the low side in suggesting that 70 percent of the new plane will be manufactured outside the United States. While the final assembly work will be done in Seattle, the choice of this location was a token gesture aimed at capturing state tax breaks and cannot cover up the fact that the most sophisticated passenger jet ever built will probably be more a Japanese product than an American one.

The earliest negative impact of the offset system was felt as far back as the

Airbus has generally sourced components for each new model initially from within Europe. Only at a later stage in the cycle does it contemplate sourcing from non-European suppliers. By that time, Airbus’s European suppliers will have moved on to more advanced work on newer Airbus models.

To be sure, in resisting offset requests, Airbus has enjoyed powerful support from European governments. Rather than countenance the transfer abroad of advanced manufacturing jobs, Airbus’s government backers have often dangled landing rights at key European airports. They have also used geopolitics to their advantage, particularly in the Middle East, where they capitalize on anti-American feeling.

As for Boeing, although it cannot copy Airbus’s tactics in detail, it has often wasted the considerable geopolitical leverage it enjoys. Take the Japanese

market, which happens to be the world's second largest. Boeing has rarely needed to give away jobs to secure orders from Japan. Quite the contrary, Japan has been more or less a captive market. After all, as the *Atlantic's* James Fallows has pointed out, U.S.-Japan trade imbalances have long been so large that Tokyo has felt obligated to find ways to boost its purchases of American goods. In the absence of compelling technical reasons to buy European, therefore, Japan's highly regulated airlines surely had little choice but to buy American. After all, by dint of scale economies, Boeing enjoyed a commercial edge over Airbus well into the 1990s. Certainly, while the transfer of jobs to secure orders has been merely lamentable, the transfer of advanced technology has been utterly inexcusable. Given that Boeing was safe from undercutting by Airbus, it could easily have resisted the more outrageous technology requests, particularly those from Japan.

What is undeniable is that Airbus's refusal to sacrifice jobs and technology has done little to hold it back. Airbus passed Boeing in deliveries of new passenger jets in 2003. Part of the story is an enormous advance by Airbus and part of it is a sales implosion at Boeing. With the help of subsidies from European governments, Airbus's deliveries of completed aircraft increased from fewer than 100 in 1990 to more than 300 in 2003. By comparison, Boeing's deliveries slumped from more than 520 planes in 1990 to fewer than 290 in 2003.

All this is a far cry from the 1980s, when the combined share of Boeing and McDonnell Douglas sometimes accounted for close to 90 percent of all orders, leaving a lilliputian Airbus with a few remaining crumbs. Perhaps the most telling indicator of the scale of Boeing's fall is that, at the time of Boeing's takeover of McDonnell Douglas in 1997, the two companies together accounted for 77 percent of all planes then in service.

Even before the decision to outsource the 7E7 wing work was announced, there had been hints that Boeing's top executives were rapidly tiring of the passenger-jet business. Certainly they have given every sign of preferring to develop service businesses, notably a new telecommunications subsidiary named Connexion by Boeing. Following in the footsteps of General Electric, General Motors, IBM, and other erstwhile American industrial icons that have dramatically downsized their manufacturing workforces in recent years, Boeing has also been developing a financial services subsidiary.

Top executives inevitably put a brave face on all this, professing to see the new services as high-growth add-ons to the main manufacturing business. Nonetheless, there are strong grounds for questioning the long-term wisdom of Boeing's passionate embrace of services. Experience elsewhere suggests that such diversification is a short-term solution that inevitably dissipates much managerial time that would be better invested in the main business.

A further straw in the wind is that Boeing has been increasingly emphasizing defense contracting. In 2003, for the first time in several decades, Boeing's defense division outsold its passenger-jet division. While rising defense sales provide some respite for what remains of Boeing's beleaguered manufacturing workforce, the economic subtext is hardly flattering. Just as patriotism is proverbially the last resort of scoundrels, defense contracting tends to be the last resort of corporate America's also-rans. The point is that defense contracting is not only generally sheltered from foreign competition, but it is often priced on an all-forgiving cost-plus basis. This is how a faltering McDonnell Douglas could continue as a major defense contractor long after its passenger-jet business had imploded.

The zest for innovation has largely disappeared at Boeing. This need not have happened. After all, when Airbus got its start in the late 1960s, American companies utterly dominated the world aerospace industry—and few American aerospace companies held more high cards than Boeing.

Capitalizing on a treasure trove of aeronautical secrets acquired from a defeated Germany at the end of World War II, Boeing had led the United States into the jet age. Thus it was that Boeing developed one of America's first jet-powered bombers, the B-47. Then in 1958 Boeing launched the world's first successful passenger jet, the Boeing 707. By the mid-1960s, Boeing had become the leading maker of passenger planes—from which position it proceeded to bet the company on the 747 jumbo. Launched in 1969, the 747 nearly bankrupted Boeing but went on to become a sensational commercial success. Still, the trauma of the 747's birth seems to have cast a permanent shadow over the company's previously entrepreneurial culture. The era of visionary gambles at Boeing was over. As of the early 1990s, Airbus's chief strategist, Adam Brown, was openly taunting Boeing for having become "reactive." Brown is hardly an unbiased source, but it is indisputable that Airbus has led the industry in several notable innovations over the last three decades.

The pattern started with Airbus's first plane, the A300. When it entered service in 1974, the A300 was the world's first twin-engine wide-body. The twin-engine format slashed airline operating costs compared to the three-engine and four-engine formats of earlier wide-body planes.

Airbus again stole a march on Boeing in 1988 when it introduced so-called fly-by-wire. Fly-by-wire is the industry term for computerized navigation controls, a concept pioneered in military aircraft in the early decades after World War II. It

was later installed on the Anglo-French Concorde and, despite Concorde's dismal commercial failure, the technical success of the Concorde navigation system encouraged Airbus to use it on the A320. Boeing did not follow until 1994, when it introduced a limited version of fly-by-wire on the 777.

Fly-by-wire is important partly because it is a major weight saver. Moreover, it facilitates "interoperability." This is the industry term for standardized controls installed across a family of aircraft—a pilot-friendly feature that enables airlines to save millions on training costs.

Boeing's woes over the years were compounded by its engineers' reluctance to move to computer-aided design. Again Airbus pioneered the concept and reaped early efficiency gains. One lasting consequence is that it was a French company, Dassault, that came to dominate the market for aircraft-design software. Even Boeing now buys software from Dassault.

If anything, Boeing has become even more cautious since it took over McDonnell Douglas, which had long been notorious for its failure to innovate—a trait that, as *Fortune* magazine has commented, allowed Boeing "to all but blow it out of the airliner business." Led by Harry Stonecipher, many of McDonnell Douglas's people have succeeded to top jobs at Boeing.

Boeing has been reluctant to develop new planes. Of four new models mooted in the last 15 years, it has killed three. Most notably, in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks it shelved the so-called Sonic Cruiser, a glamorously positioned plane that would have cut the flight time from New York to London by nearly one third.

Even more significantly, in March 2001 Boeing cancelled longstanding plans for a superjumbo that was to have superseded the ageing 747. As a result, Airbus, which announced in 2000 that it

was going ahead with its own superjumbo, has a clear run at establishing a highly lucrative monopoly that looks certain to kill off the Boeing 747, for two decades Boeing's cash cow.

The Airbus superjumbo, to be known as the A380, will make aviation history as the world's first four-aisle plane. It will also be the first full double-decker passenger jet. Carrying 555 passengers in its launch version in 2006, it is expected in later models to carry as many as 840.

Responding via e-mail (the company declined to be interviewed), a Boeing spokesman made light of the problems. Boeing's research cuts, for instance, merely reflect a cyclical low, he said. The fact is, however, that research spending relative to total revenues is now far lower than at a similar cyclical low in the latter half of the 1980s (and it is running at less than half the rate of the mid-1990s). Even if spending increases as the 7E7 project goes forward, Boeing's share is likely to be quite small: the point is that much of the burden will be shouldered by foreign partners.

Boeing plays down the importance of know-how transfers to Japan and maintains that much U.S. taxpayer-funded research being transferred is already in the public domain. Stan Sorscher, an official of Boeing's main white-collar union, acknowledges that while there is some truth in this, Boeing's work with NASA has yielded much tacit knowledge that is not published. Such knowledge is often where the real national economic advantage is and its transfer represents a serious loss to the American national interest. Because Boeing no longer sees a future in making key parts of its planes, it no longer seems to put a high value on practical production know-how. By contrast, for the Japanese, focused as always on boosting their labor productivity in advanced manufacturing, such know-how is pure gold.

Boeing also plays down the importance of its wing deal with Japan. It would appear that Japan's participation will be less comprehensive than originally indicated in 2003. But if the Japanese wing builders are really now to play Robin to Boeing's Batman, it is puzzling that this has not been more widely publicized. As of late December the *Seattle Times's* well-informed aerospace correspondent Dominic Gates was still flatly stating that the 7E7's wings would be made in Japan.

It seems clear that nothing much has changed apart from the spin that Boeing wants to put on the deal. Certainly changing political realities dictate a different spin. After all, Boeing's room for maneuver is increasingly being constrained by the Pentagon scandal. Meanwhile, on the Japanese side, the fact that America's huge trade deficits are suddenly again on Washington's front burner will not have gone unnoticed.

That said, Boeing has a point in arguing that not all its problems are of its own making. What is important now is not so much allocating blame as reversing the company's power dive. While there is plenty of room for debate about detailed measures, it is clear that absent a changed mindset—both at the national level and at the company level—Boeing's fate is sealed.

Of course, Boeing's problems are part of a much larger syndrome of decline in American manufacturing. If the United States wants to retain control of its economic and political destiny, a whole litany of changes is necessary to reverse the globalist drift of American manufacturing policy. But at the end of the day, such changes are all moot if American policy makers do not change their fundamental mindset. Quite simply, *laissez faire* is not enough in an industry as concentrated and geopolitically significant as aerospace.



As for America's policy on aircraft trade, this seems doomed to failure. It consists after all of little more than beseeching the Europeans to stop subsidizing Airbus. In years gone by, when Airbus was much smaller and the United States enjoyed more influence, there might have been some hope of being heard. But that time has gone. Even if Boeing could claim that it is without sin in the matter of taking government largesse, it is unlikely the Europeans would listen to American pleas.

Under these circumstances, Washington needs to take a more radical approach. On the Left, many observers advocate a wholehearted industrial policy for the aircraft industry. But perhaps a better solution—and one certainly more in accord with America's capitalist tradition—is an idea put forward by economist Pat Choate. Choate, author of *Hot Property*, a forthcoming book on the theft of American intellectual property, suggests a "sphere-of-influence" approach similar to that which applied in the chemicals industry in the first half of the last century. Basically, the concept is to let Airbus have the run of the European market while Boeing would have North America. These spheres of influence would be defined by tariffs on both sides. In third-country markets, the two companies would be free to compete on level terms and this discipline would provide a strong incentive for efficiency.

Given the especially open nature of American democracy, many policy options are likely to be considered—and hotly debated. What everyone can agree on is that it is now past time for something that hitherto has been sorely absent: leadership. ■

*Eamonn Fingleton is the author of Unsustainable: How Economic Dogma is Destroying American Prosperity.*

# Pleading the Fourteenth

Congress already holds the power to define marriage.

By Austin Bramwell

DESPITE THEIR SUCCESS in the 2004 election, gay-marriage opponents can't seem to shake their sense of doom. Eleven states may have passed constitutional amendments defining marriage as between a man and a woman, but same-sex marriage still has an apparently ineluctable logic on its side. As homosexual activists continue to advance their cause in a sympathetic judiciary, more and more states will have gay marriage imposed on them. Gay marriage will then be imported into other states, so that eventually the Supreme Court—which for the past ten years has overturned or disregarded any doctrine standing in the way of the gay-rights movement—will have an opportunity to impose same-sex marriage on the entire country. Only a constitutional amendment, therefore, can stop gay marriage. At the same time, however, a constitutional amendment has no hope of passing. In the end, the logic of events makes gay marriage inevitable.

Hogwash. It isn't true that only a constitutional amendment can stop the courts from imposing gay marriage. On the contrary, Congress can stop the gay-marriage movement cold by passing a simple statute. That statute need say nothing more than "No State shall define marriage as anything other than between a man and a woman."

Surprising as it may at first seem, Congress derives the power to pass such a statute from the Fourteenth Amendment. The argument goes as follows: Section 5 of the Fourteenth Amendment gives Congress "the power to enforce,

by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article." It is well-settled that the Fourteenth Amendment protects the fundamental right to marry. States may not violate this right by redefining marriage as something other than it really is. Therefore, Congress can pass a statute underscoring the correct definition of marriage.

Let's unpack that. First, the Fourteenth Amendment protects the right to marry. Although it does not mention this right explicitly, the Fourteenth Amendment does prohibit states from abridging "the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States," depriving "any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law," or denying "to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." The Supreme Court has long understood this broad language to protect any right that is "implicit in the concept of ordered liberty."

Furthermore, in *Loving v. Virginia*, the case that struck down anti-miscegenation laws, the Supreme Court recognized that one of these rights is the right to marry. Interestingly, the court in *Loving* cited an earlier case, *Skinner v. Oklahoma*, that connected the right to marry to the right to procreate. Insofar as biology prevents homosexual couples from procreating, one can assume that the *Loving* court had heterosexual marriage exclusively in mind.

Second, states may not violate the right to marry by redefining matrimony however they like. One way that states can violate the right to marry, as *Loving* recognized, is to criminalize certain

categories of marriage. Surely another way that states can violate the right to marry is to redefine marriage out of existence. For example, if a state supreme court or legislature stipulated that “marriage in this state shall only be between an adult and his or her pet,” that state would effectively prevent people from getting married. Marriage, after all, has an essential nature, which states cannot ignore without doing away with the institution altogether.

Even gay-marriage proponents implicitly recognize that states may not redefine marriage out of existence. Homosexual activists would not be satisfied, after all, if states redefined marriage as “between one entity and another entity.” Under such a regime, one man could “marry” another man. But so too could one hermit crab “marry” another hermit crab (or a goldfish or a fire hydrant, for that matter). Gays in that case would not benefit from the elevated social and moral status that they hope to obtain by having the government recognize their relationships as “marriages.”

Similarly, if marriage were redefined to include gay relationships, straight married couples would lose the unique burdens and privileges that come with traditional matrimony. Marriage is a public act: by redefining marriage to be what it is not, states would violate the right of all persons to receive the social

5 of the Fourteenth Amendment states that Congress has the power to enforce its provisions by appropriate legislation. That is to say, Congress may pass legislation that prevents states from violating Fourteenth Amendment rights. Pursuant to this power, for example, Congress has passed the various civil-rights statutes.

Now, if states were to violate the Fourteenth Amendment right to marry by adopting an absurd definition of marriage, then surely Congress, under the Fourteenth Amendment, could step in and prevent states from ignoring the essential nature of the institution. Congress, therefore, has the power under the Fourteenth Amendment to make sure that all states adopt the correct definition of marriage. The only remaining question is what that correct definition really is.

There, of course, is the rub. Thus far, most courts and mainstream legal scholars would agree with the foregoing line of reasoning: there is a right to marry, states cannot violate this right by ignoring the essential nature of marriage, therefore, Congress has some discretion to impose a national definition of marriage. Where courts and scholars might differ is in how much discretion Congress actually has.

Here we move beyond legal doctrine and into the realm of politics and strategy. Let us assume that Congress did pass a statute defining marriage as

assume, of course, that the Supreme Court will continue to do everything in its power to advance the gay-rights agenda. But the court can only do so much. It cannot, for example, hand down a decision so unpopular as to produce a backlash that will undermine the court’s vaunted position in public life. The court tried that in the 1970s, when it almost did away with the death penalty and quickly had to back down.

Similarly, if the court defied the political branches on the question of gay marriage, the political branches might actually begin to fight back. Congress might, for example, strip the courts of jurisdiction to hear cases relating to same-sex marriage. The people might even pass a constitutional amendment reversing the Supreme Court’s decision. The justices, in sum, will not lightly traduce Congress and impose a policy as unpopular as gay marriage.

The court will therefore do whatever it can to avoid compelling the whole nation to recognize same-sex marriage. The beauty of a statute defining marriage as between a man and a woman is that it will force the issue upon the court. The justices know that they cannot impose gay marriage; they could not, however, overturn a statute defining marriage as between a man and a woman without also holding that marriage is not necessarily between a man and a woman. From the point of view of gay-marriage proponents, the court would be caught between the Scylla of upholding the traditional definition of marriage and the Charybdis of provoking an enormous popular backlash by rejecting that traditional definition.

Constitutional lawyers might recall at this point that recent Supreme Court decisions have purported to limit Congress’s Fourteenth Amendment enforcement powers. In *Boerne v. City of Flores*, for example, the court held that Congress cannot protect Fourteenth

## CONGRESS HAS SOME DISCRETION TO IMPOSE A NATIONAL DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE.

benefits and uphold the social expectations of being wedded to a human being of the opposite sex. Gay activists, in turn, no less than gay-marriage opponents, believe that marriage has an essential nature; they just do not believe that it must be between a man and a woman.

Third, the Fourteenth Amendment gives Congress the authority to uphold the correct definition of marriage. Section

between a man and a woman. Inevitably, such a statute would be challenged in the courts and the case would find its way to the Supreme Court. What is the likely result?

One cannot say for sure, but the odds favor the court upholding the statute. Certainly the justices favor such an outcome more than they favor the passing of a constitutional amendment. We can

Amendment rights in any way that it pleases. On the contrary, a majority of the justices held that there must be “congruence and proportionality between the injury to be prevented and the means adopted to that end.” Thus in *Boerne*, the court struck down as applied to the states the bipartisan Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), which protected the right of free exercise of religion more strongly than the court would have protected it.

In contrast to RFRA, however, a statute that does nothing other than define marriage to be what it really is does not violate the court’s “congruence and proportionality” test. A statute that simply underscores the correct definition of marriage is, well, by definition perfectly tailored to prevent the injury caused by false definitions of marriage. The justices might struggle to get around this argument, but to do so they would have to ignore or set aside their previous decisions.

Finally, it could be objected that the court might just roll the dice and impose gay marriage nationally. For opponents of same-sex marriage, however, this represents not a risk but an opportunity. Strategically, gay-marriage opponents’ only hope is to harness the potential popular backlash caused by the courts imposing it too quickly. If, on the other hand, the courts were forced to choose tomorrow between imposing gay marriage nationally and upholding traditional marriage, gay-marriage opponents would face a win-win situation: They would either stop gay marriage outright, or else they would generate enough political momentum to strike back at the courts.

Gay marriage opponents need not despair. The people are on their side. All they need is the right strategy. ■

*Austin Bramwell is a lawyer in New York City.*

# The People’s Party

Democrats ponder a populist response to values voters.

By W. James Antle III

PARTISANS OF EVERY stripe inevitably become disappointed when their preferred candidate loses an election, but some sectors of the Democratic Party responded to John Kerry’s defeat with outrage and despair. George W. Bush was weighed down by war and lackluster job growth and was regarded by most Democrats as a right-wing incompetent self-evidently undeserving of reelection—and yet they lost to him, however narrowly. Morally conservative values voters were the major targets of post-election liberal anger.

But not all Democrats are busy penning op-eds proclaiming the death of the Enlightenment or chortling over e-mails that depict the states Bush carried as “Jesusland.” A growing number of party insiders and savvy activists are instead doing something more productive: devising plans to turn red states blue. And they hope to do so by negating the Republicans’ advantage on moral issues.

This strategizing is not limited to socially conservative Democrats who fear their party has moved too far to the Left on issues like abortion and gay marriage. Progressives also ardently believe values can be discussed on Democratic terms by offering economic populism as a counterweight to cultural conservatism. “It is imperative that Democrats and progressives start a nationwide debate that frames economic justice as a moral issue,” write Peter Dreier and Kelly Candaele in the *Nation*. “Not only would this be the right thing to do. It would seem to be a winning electoral issue.”

The right thing to do from a liberal perspective perhaps, but a winning issue at the ballot box? The economic populists argue that Bill Clinton’s New Democrats, by embracing unfair trade and big-money corporate donors, have tarnished their party’s reputation as defender of the working man. By refusing to protect the economic interests of struggling families from globalization, job loss, and corporate power, Democrats have ceded lower-middle-class votes to the GOP. Standing with these voters against big business would help win them back.

It’s a plausible enough theory. But is there any evidence that it would work in practice? Dreier and Candaele point out that in two key swing states, Florida and Nevada, ballot initiatives to raise the minimum wage passed by margins that far exceeded Bush’s. Michael Tomasky, executive editor of the *American Prospect*, argued that much earlier in the election cycle, it was the Democratic presidential candidates running on populist platforms “ripping into corporate special interests and even talking about class” who prospered while business-friendly centrists like Joe Lieberman languished.

But David Sirota, a young political operative described by *Newsweek* as “the Internet child of the Clinton ‘war-room’ generation,” has provided some of the strongest arguments in his one-man crusade against the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC). “[P]rogressives are making inroads into culturally conservative areas by talking about

economic class,” he contends in the *American Prospect*. “This is not the traditional (and often condescending) Democratic pandering about the need for a nanny government to provide for the masses. It is us-versus-them red meat, straight talk about how the system is working against ordinary Americans.”

Sirota highlights the fact that Congressman Bernard Sanders (I-VT) runs as well in his state’s Republican areas along the New Hampshire border as he does among the Ben-and-Jerry’s-and-Birkenstock set. To what does he attribute Sanders’s success in the Northeast Kingdom? “In the 1990s,” Sirota writes, “[Sanders] was one of the most energetic opponents of the trade deals with China and Mexico that destroyed the local economy.” Notwithstanding Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle’s defeat by Republican John Thune in the South Dakota Senate race, Democrats hold all the other congressional seats in both rock-ribbed Republican Dakotas. Sirota argues that populist stances against unfair trade pacts and agribusiness-friendly farming policies explain this apparent disconnect. He also points out that GOP charges of class warfare have not sidetracked the careers of such rising Democratic stars as New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer, a bane of Wall Street.

One can quibble with some of Sirota’s other examples. He argues that Mississippi Democratic Congressman Gene Taylor “bucks his district’s GOP tilt by mixing opposition to free trade” with a feisty, down-home persona. But Taylor has a 70 percent lifetime rating from the American Conservative Union, making him one of Congress’s most conservative Democrats—there are plenty of other reasons Republicans might cross party lines to vote for him. Brian Schweitzer—Sirota worked on his winning gubernatorial campaign in bright-red Montana and wrote about it for the

*Washington Monthly*—strongly opposes both gun control and gay marriage.

Even Bernie Sanders originally won his House seat in 1990 in part by campaigning against the incumbent Republican’s vote for an assault-weapons ban. The socialist Sanders voted against the Brady bill in 1992, although he has since moved left on gun control. Sirota concedes that many of the Democrats who win conservative votes despite running left on economics “are pro-gun, some of them anti-abortion.”

But perhaps this openness to melding cultural conservatism with economic populism—a way of bridging the gap between the messages of jobs, financial security, and health care and “God, guns, and gays”—may be an improvement over past approaches. The arguments of liberals who advocate using pocketbook issues to win over red-state voters often take on a condescending tone. In *What’s the Matter With Kansas?*, Thomas Frank treats the social conservatism of the working class as a kind of false consciousness and implies that non-economic issues are somehow less legitimate. Robert Kuttner wrote in the aftermath of the election that it was because of Bill Clinton’s attention to middle-class economic concerns that “Middle America forgave him for treating gays as people.”

Some would-be Democratic populists, however, don’t rail against their regions’ prevailing moral values. Instead, they either embrace or accommodate them. They understand social conservatism as a form of cultural solidarity with the electorate. But rather than simply imitating Republicans, they are packaging their economic-policy views on jobs, trade, outsourcing, and health care in ways that reinforce that solidarity. Where GOP conservatives run against a liberal cultural elite, the new populists campaign against an economic elite. Instead of accepting abor-

tion as a wedge issue, they are trying to drive a wedge between Middle America and corporate America.

Could immigration be added to the list of topics used to achieve this last objective? It’s a conspicuous opportunity, but few progressives seem likely to take advantage. Kuttner did write in a recent column advocating national ID cards: “We try to control our borders, but millions of foreigners overstay tourist or student visas or slip in illegally, in order to work. They are able to take jobs because business wants them here to work for low wages and be conveniently frightened of exercising their labor rights.” And ID cards, he maintains, would help deter illegal immigration.

Not all Democrats are convinced that class-consciousness is the key to Democratic success in red regions. “Most people growing up want a party that recognizes success as well as fairness,” explains former Maryland legislator Tim Maloney. “People are not interested in the redistribution of wealth, and if we’re seen as unfriendly to business we’ll pay a price.”

Groups like the Third Way, co-chaired by moderate Sens. Evan Bayh (D-Ind.), Tom Carper (D-Del.), and Blanche Lincoln (D-Ark.), have joined older organizations like the DLC in striving to pull the Democratic Party back toward the center. Third Way, as befits its Capitol Hill connections, is focused on moving a legislative agenda in the Senate as opposed to grassroots activism or think-tank-style policy formulation. Its mission statement touts “progressive centrism” as the key to thwarting “right-wing extremism.” The group’s founders, Jonathan Cowan, Jim Kessler, and Matt Bennett, previously ran Americans for Gun Safety, a moderate gun-control outfit with which Third Way shares office space.

Centrist Democrats argue that in appealing to the “moderate majority” they can replicate the successes of the



Clinton years, when the party reconnected with the middle class by losing its image as tough on business but soft on crime. Will Marshall, president of the DLC-affiliated Progressive Policy Institute, told the *Los Angeles Times* that class-conscious economic populism “doesn’t work for the audience the left thinks will be swayed by it, working middle-class families who aspire to better lives and want to know what Democratic policies will help them achieve it.” “We need to stay in the mainstream,” says Maloney. “Core Democratic values are mainstream values.”

Moderates can also plausibly claim some success in making the party family-friendly. Despite Clinton’s numerous celebrity supporters, Democrats during the pre-Monica 1990s were identified as much with V-chips and school uniforms as the Hollywood Left. Perhaps E.J. Dionne’s advice in the *Washington Post* could help Democrats return to those days: “When television networks and Hollywood exploit sex to make money, why aren’t liberals asking why the free market so revered by the right wing promotes values the very same right wing claims to despise?”

Some liberals take a different view of the centrists’ legacy, which to them involved the Democrats’ embrace of big business at the expense of their social base. “And the DLC, which led the fight for NAFTA and the China trade deal,” writes Sirota in his latest fusillade against moderate Democrats, “attacks those who want to renegotiate those pacts as just a marginal group of ‘protectionists.’”

Others are likely to join this debate. On the economic populists’ side is likely to be the little-talked-about Religious Left, residing at outlets like *Sojourners*, which bills itself as a magazine of “Christians for Justice and Peace.” Its editor, Jim Wallis, writes in *USA Today*, “Thousands of verses in the Bible make

poverty a moral and religious issue... Important issues of war and peace are deeply theological and just as much a ‘life issue’ as is abortion.” Some more secular liberals also seem to sense an opportunity to re-brand liberalism in the language of faith. “But isn’t it a moral issue when more than 36 million Americans live in poverty and more than 40 million people in the wealthiest country in the world lack health insurance?” Dreier and Candaele write in the *Nation*. “Many major religious denominations support raising the minimum wage.”

Yet discussing economics in terms of values won’t make the traditional social issues go away. “If we’re seen as the party of partial-birth abortion and gay marriage,” Maloney avers, “we’ll go down in flames.”

Economic populists may also face more substantive problems. While conservative predictions of a new investor class appear overstated, Americans invested in the stock market—more than half of all households—may be less eager for class warfare than left-populists suppose. Shielding small businesses from punitive tax and regulatory policies targeting corporations will likely prove difficult in practice. And just because policies are popular in the short term doesn’t mean they will work.

Nevertheless, as the Democrats debate their future they face some interesting opportunities, many of them provided by Republican weaknesses. Conservatives would be wise to watch carefully. ■

## ANNOUNCING THE 2005 PHILLIPS FOUNDATION JOURNALISM FELLOWSHIPS

### • WORKING JOURNALISTS ELIGIBLE FOR \$50,000 •

If you are a working print journalist with less than five years of professional experience, a unique opportunity awaits—the chance to apply for a grant to complete a one-year project of your choosing, focusing on journalism supportive of American culture and a free society.

Founded in 1990, the Phillips Foundation is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to advance the cause of objective journalism. The Foundation’s fellowship program serves to provide support for journalists who share the Foundation’s mission: to advance constitutional principles, a democratic society and a vibrant free enterprise system.

The Phillips Foundation offers \$50,000 full-time and \$25,000 part-time journalism fellowships. Applications are now being accepted for 2005. Applications must be postmarked by March 1, 2005. The winners will be announced at an awards dinner in Washington in the Spring. The fellowships will begin on September 1, 2005. Applicants must be U.S. citizens.

For applications and more information, visit our website or write:

Mr. John Farley

THE PHILLIPS FOUNDATION

One Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Suite 610, Washington, DC 20001

Telephone (202) 842-2002

E-mail: [jfarley@phillips.com](mailto:jfarley@phillips.com)

[www.thephillipsfoundation.org](http://www.thephillipsfoundation.org)

Deadline: March 1, 2005

# Democracy for Everyone?

High-violence societies may not be ready for representative government.

By James L. Payne

DO WE KNOW what it takes to implant democracy in a foreign land? For over a century now, the United States has been sending troops into troubled countries and trying to establish free and stable governments. While the results have not always been disappointing, the track record overall is not good.

The results of our first effort, the 1898 intervention in Cuba, are typical. Following the Spanish-American War, the U.S. administered Cuba for four years, turning power over to an elected Cuban president in 1902. A violent revolution forced him from office, and U.S. troops came back in 1906. After more reforms and new elections, we again turned power over to the Cubans in 1909. More instability ensued, including another violent revolt. American Marines came back yet a third time in 1917, restored order, set up another constitutional regime, and withdrew in 1922. Cuba has since seen a succession of unstable and autocratic regimes, most recently the totalitarian dictatorship of Fidel Castro.

Recent nation-building efforts—in Haiti, in Afghanistan, in Iraq—seem to indicate that our understanding has not progressed since the days of the Cuban intervention. The problem isn't that we have the wrong theory about nation-building. Policymakers simply don't have any theory. The practice has been to assume that wherever U.S. troops end up as a result of this or that foreign-policy initiative, a democracy can be made to flourish. Our approach is that of hikers who set out assuming that any place they choose to stop will make a

suitable campsite. Surely the time has come to question this expectation. There are bound to be countries where democracy cannot be made to succeed, at least not within any reasonable time-frame. We might save ourselves frustration, and guide policy more intelligently, if we identify those places.

While nation-builders have casually assumed that democracy can be established anywhere, scholars have gone to the opposite extreme. For them, democracy is a delicate flower that requires a host of social and institutional prerequisites from literacy, education, property ownership, and income equality to an impartial judiciary and a professional civil service. This comprehensive list greatly overshoots the mark, defining a practically perfect society not likely to exist anywhere. To understand real-world democracy, we need to put aside the wish list of academics and focus on the bare minimum needed for democracy to exist.

What is that minimum? A restraint in the use of violence in domestic political affairs. In a functioning democracy, we tend to take this condition for granted. We assume that opposition leaders do not routinely try to shoot their way into power. We assume that presidents do not routinely jail and murder their opponents. In many foreign lands, however, people resort to violence in political disputes. They are willing to kill—and to risk being killed—to counter a perceived wrong or to implement what they believe to be right—or just to get themselves in power. In these high-violence societies, democracy cannot thrive.

This is not to say that democracies need perfect domestic peace. They can survive instances of isolated violence. There is an enormous difference, which observers usually ignore, between an assassination carried out by a lone killer and one planned by political leaders and condoned by a large segment of the public. The former has no more political significance than a fatal automobile accident. The latter sets the stage for a civil war or a dictatorial crackdown. It is not the assassination, riot, or terrorism that identifies a high-violence society. It is the fact that these acts of violence are deliberately used as tools by some leaders in their struggle against others. Leaders who employ them are not repudiated; their followers excuse their bloody deeds as necessary, understandable tactics.

The idea that there are national differences in the disposition to resort to political violence takes some getting used to, for it is politically incorrect to suggest that one group of people might be significantly different from another. We are not, however, speaking of a biological or genetic difference. The inclination to resort to violence is a cultural orientation transmitted from one generation to another and, as the historical record clearly shows, it can be unlearned.

There's a second reason we resist the notion that some cultures are more politically violent than others: we assume that motives are the complete explanation for violence. At least since John Locke, we have been taught to interpret violence as the understandable response to an "intolerable" situation.

The American Revolution is a classic example. The cause of this violence is supposed to have been the justified anger of the colonists at the “long train of abuses and usurpations” of King George. Using the same logic, we say that people are revolting in this or that foreign land because they have a strong reason to: they are hungry, they are a disparaged minority, or they are fanatics who want to impose their religion or ideology.

Of course, motives, ideals, and ideologies do play a role in political violence. No one takes up the sword for no reason. But in every country, there always are possible motives for violence. There are always grievances, injustices, and abuses, and there are always extreme worldviews and ideologies. What we overlook is that in some cultures, participants readily give these grievances violent form, while in more peaceful cultures the same grievances do not produce a violent reaction.

For example, a common complaint of those who start civil wars is that they have been the victims of an unfair electoral process, that they were cheated out of their rightful victory. At first glance, this seems an adequate motive for a revolt. A closer look reveals, however, that elections in democracies frequently involve serious irregularities that the losers believe robbed them of victory. Yet they do not turn to violence. The election of George W. Bush in 2000 is an example. In addition to the claims of ballot irregularities in Florida, this election violated a core principle of democracy: the candidate who obtained the most popular votes nationwide was denied victory (by the Electoral College arrangement). Many Democratic leaders were—and still are—angry about that election, but they did not turn to force to retaliate.

The point is profoundly paradoxical. In an established democracy, participants do not take up arms to protest even a transgression of democratic principles, such as a case—real or imagined—of

electoral fraud. The hallmark of these societies is a relatively low disposition to resort to political violence for any reason. In a high-violence society, even apparently trivial ones, seem to provoke a violent reaction.

There is yet another issue that gets in the way of our ability to recognize a high-violence society: our inclination to take sides in foreign political disputes. There have been times in certain countries when one political group is a gang of thugs and almost everyone else is peaceful and decent. Unfortunately, there is a tendency to perceive all politics everywhere in these terms. We see a dictator using force to repress and persecute his opponents. Naturally we condemn him, but then, as part of the psychological mechanism of taking sides, we further assume that his opponents are blameless. Sometimes this really may be the case. But in many Third World situations, this impulse to look for “good guys” leads us to overlook the fact that many or most of the other participants are rather thuggish by democratic standards.

IF DEMOCRACY ALREADY WAS **FUNCTIONING PRIOR TO THE DICTATORSHIP**,  
THAT IS A SIGN THAT MOST PARTICIPANTS IN THE COUNTRY ARE **RATHER PEACEFUL**.

Iraq affords a good illustration of this process of distortion. Saddam Hussein was certainly a nasty dictator. There was no phase of violence he did not engage in, from murdering rivals and massacring minority groups to invading neighboring countries. In the process of taking sides against him, however, many observers were led to suppose that he alone was responsible for the violence in Iraq. This meant that all the other participants—Shi'ites, Kurds, and so on—were seen as blameless and peaceful. From this perspective, removing Saddam could result in a stable, peaceful regime. Unfortunately, the assumption was and

is wrong. Iraq is a high-violence society. There are many participants disposed to act in thuggish ways, and their violence makes a democracy virtually untenable.

It is understandable that we should condemn the brutality of a foreign dictator. But our disapproval should not lead us to assume that the ruler is the only one in that society disposed to use force.

How does a high-violence society get to be that way? While a natural question to ask, it betrays a misunderstanding. It suggests that a violent politics is a variable condition, like an illness that can be contracted, gotten over, and then contracted again. As we look into the political history of different cultures, we do not see this up and down pattern. Instead, we find that all countries seem to begin as high-violence societies, and then they evolve away from this pattern. Many years ago, countries like England, France, Italy, and Norway were all characterized by an extremely violent politics. For example, the regime of Henry VIII in England was as violent and as vicious as any modern dictatorship.

Henry murdered not just inconvenient wives, but scores of noblemen—even children—as well as loyal aides and advisors. Henry wasn't the only one who lived by the sword in those days. He faced revolts in Lincolnshire, Scotland, Ireland, and Yorkshire. The Yorkshire revolt was put down with the aid of a promise of amnesty, which Henry subsequently betrayed, ordering his henchmen to perform “dreadful execution” on “the inhabitants of every town, village, and hamlet that have offended.” Today we call this genocide; in the old days, it was politics as usual.

Hence, a high violence-society does

not get that way from any particular cause or condition. It is better understood as a country mired in the past, a country that has failed to make the transition away from a highly violent politics. When it comes to political violence, Iraq in the early 21st century is almost exactly what England was in the mid-15th century. The question we need to ask, then, is not what went wrong with Iraq, it is what went right with England—and the other areas that evolved away from the violent politics of an earlier time.

## THE EVOLUTION AWAY FROM VIOLENCE APPEARS TO TAKE A LONG TIME.

This is not a simple question. Political violence is a topic that has been all but ignored by historians and political scientists, and as a result we have very little knowledge about how and why a society evolves away from a violent politics. The best we can do at this point is to sketch out some preliminary observations.

First, the evolution away from violence appears to take a long time. It may seem from our modern perspective that political violence is wrongheaded and inefficient, and therefore it ought to be rather easy to tell people to stop it. Unfortunately, the impulse to violence is embedded in and reinforced by a broad cultural mindset, one that encompasses a host of attitudes, including intolerance, naiveté, hubris, paranoia, and emotionalism. It may not take centuries, as it did in England, to overcome this profoundly immature outlook, but it cannot be talked away in a week, a year, or even a decade.

Second, because the evolution away from violence is mainly a cultural change, it is little affected by institutional measures. The adoption of a certain kind of constitution, for example, will not make much difference. In the 19th century, countries all over Latin America copied the American Constitution on the theory

that this paper document was the cause of U.S. political stability. These attempts to imitate American institutions failed to check the furious pace of revolution. England proves the converse of the point: it evolved to a peaceful politics without the benefit of any written constitution.

Third, it seems likely that growing wealth plays an underlying role in assisting the evolution away from force. As people become wealthier, they live better, and their lives are more pleasant. Hence, they begin to place a greater

value on their lives and, by extension, on the lives of others. This is not, in the main, a mechanical, rational process. A man who becomes rich and comfortable does not suddenly abandon his violence-prone outlook. Instead, the effect of prosperity percolates through the culture, gradually changing the underlying perspectives related to violence.

Fourth, another factor that probably promotes the movement away from violence is communication. Communication enables observers to see the folly and waste of violence in conflicts that do not directly involve them. Again, this effect is not a direct or mechanical one. It's not enough for people to notice that a war is foolish. This perception must gradually enter thought processes and culture, weakening the attractions of war, lowering the status of professions related to war, and so on.

Fifth, the movement away from violence probably begins with the elites, since elites are the first to experience prosperity and its life-enhancing effects. Elites are also the first to benefit from communication (universities, books), and thus are likely to be the first to question the traditional emphasis on violence. The lower classes, for whom life is harder and therefore less valued, proba-

bly remain more disposed toward violence in the early stages of the society's evolution toward a peaceful politics.

A society that has made some progress toward a nonviolent politics can retrogress, for a time, when the lower classes become politically active. In 18th-century France, for example, politics within the established elites was relatively nonviolent. Political murder had been abandoned for over a century. The popular classes, however, were still strongly oriented toward violence. They carried out bloody riots and, finally, the Revolution of 1789 and endorsed and sustained the bloody leaders who came to the fore at that time.

Sixth, it is possible for a small criminal subgroup to gain control of a government in a society that has made a nearly complete transition to low-violence politics. Once in control, this subgroup may establish an extremely violent dictatorship—which gives a misleading picture of society's overall attachment to force. This is the “gang of thugs” possibility mentioned earlier.

The takeover by these violent leaders is facilitated by two circumstances: 1) a naïve, vigorous ideology that justifies extreme measures including violence, and 2) a body of lower-class followers who accept, or at least excuse, political violence. An example of this pattern was Hitler's takeover in Germany in 1933. By the 1920s, Germany had made most of the transition away from being a high-violence society. Political murder among elites was many centuries in the past, there had been freedom of the press for decades, and a number of open elections. The American reporter William L. Shirer observed, “Most Germans one met—politicians, writers, editors, artists, professors, students, businessmen, labor leaders—struck you as being democratic, liberal, even pacifist.” Hitler was a deviant from this elite culture, a leader who combined demagoguery and violence in



a lethal brew. The pattern was similar in Italy where, again, a thug—Mussolini—used a simplistic ideology and violent lower-class followers to gain control of a basically peaceful country. Japan followed a similar route. There, a group of younger army officers, crazed by a primitive nationalistic ideology, turned to extreme violence, pushing a liberal society into a militaristic dictatorship.

In all three countries, all that was needed to have a democracy was the removal of the violent leadership cadre and discrediting of its violent ideology. The drafting of a constitution and implementing of reforms—though they may have been beneficial in themselves—were not necessary to allow a peaceful, democratic politics to re-emerge. The populace was already relatively peaceful.

These observations suggest that if one is going to invade a country and overthrow a dictatorship in the hope of seeing democracy there in short order, one should be sure it is not a high-violence society. One needs to gauge the extent to which participants outside the dictatorship group are peaceful. If democracy already was to some extent functioning prior to the dictatorship—as seen by competitive elections and relative freedom of expression—that is a sign that most participants in the country are rather peaceful and that democracy can succeed once the dictator is removed.

On the other hand, if the country has nothing but violent traditions—dictatorship, repression, political murder, and revolt—then it is naïve to expect that democracy could be quickly established.

In these high-violence societies, an occupying country may pay lip service to the goal of establishing democracy, but that is, in the short term, a hopeless goal. In practice it will end up pursuing a policy of stability, which involves these elements: 1) violent repression of the most visible violent opposition forces; 2) truces with gangs and warlords willing to

keep a lower profile; and 3) the creation of a puppet government that eventually becomes, or gives way to, a dictatorship. After many decades of autocratic rule, the society may achieve the transition away from violence, thus making it possible for a democracy to emerge.

A good example of this pattern is the Philippines, which the United States occupied following the 1898 Spanish-American War. For the first 14 years, the U.S. administration was busy suppressing revolts (in which reportedly 200,000 locals were slain). Following independence in 1946, democratic politics was emerging with competitive elections and some freedom of expression. But violence was not far away, first in the form of the Hukbalahap Rebellion, defeated in 1953, and later in riots and revolts that led to the autocracy of the Marcos

regime. This relatively mild dictatorship was chased from office by public demonstrations in 1986. That date may perhaps be said to mark the country's coming of age as a full democracy.

It would not be correct to say, then, that a high-violence society like Iraq cannot become a democracy. It probably will become one in the long run. One doubts, however, that those who urged the invasion of Iraq in order to establish democracy there had any inkling that the process is likely to take the better part of a century. ■

---

*James L. Payne has taught political science at Yale, Wesleyan, Johns Hopkins, and Texas A&M. His most recent book is A History of Force. A longer version of this article will appear in the spring issue of The Independent Review.*

# Walking Wounded

Old soldiers don't fade away

By Fred Reed

THE OBSERVANT WILL have noticed that we hear little from the troops in Iraq and see almost nothing of the wounded. Why, one might wonder, does not CNN put an enlisted Marine before a camera and, for 15 minutes without editing, let him say what he thinks? Is he not an adult and a citizen? Is he not engaged in important events on our behalf?

Sound political reasons exist. Soldiers are a risk PR-wise, the wounded a liability. No one can tell what they might say, and conspicuous dismemberment is bad for recruiting. An enlisted man in front of a camera is dangerous. He could wreck the governmental spin apparatus in five minutes. It is better to keep soldiers discreetly out of sight.

So we do not see much of the casualties, ours or theirs. Yet they are there, somewhere, with missing legs, blind, becoming accustomed to groping at things in their new darkness, learning to use the wheelchairs that will be theirs for 50 years. Some face worse fates than others. Quadriplegics will be warehoused in VA hospitals where nurses will turn them at intervals, like hamburgers, to prevent bedsores. Friends and relatives will soon forget them. Suicide will be a frequent thought. The less damaged will get around.

For a brief moment perhaps the casualties will believe, then try desperately to keep believing, that they did something brave and worthy and terribly important

for that abstraction, country. Some will expect thanks. But there will be no thanks, or few, and those quickly forgotten. It will be worse. People will ask how they lost the leg. In Iraq, they will say, hoping for sympathy, or respect, or understanding. The response, often unvoiced but unmistakable, will be, "What did you do *that* for?" The wounded will realize that they are not only crippled, but freaks.

The years will go by. Iraq will fade into the mist. Wars always do. A generation will rise for whom it will be just history. The dismembered veterans will find first that almost nobody appreciates what they did, then that few even remember it. If—when, many would say—the United States is driven out of Iraq, the soldiers will look back and realize that the whole affair was a fraud. Wars are just wars. They seem important at the time. At any rate, we are told that they are important.

Yet the wounds will remain. Arms do not grow back. For the paralyzed there will never be girlfriends, dancing, rolling in the grass with children. The blind will adapt as best they can. Those with merely a missing leg will count themselves lucky. They will hobble about, managing to lead semi-normal lives, and people will say, "How well he handles it." An admirable freak. For others it will be less good. A colostomy bag is a sorry companion on a wedding night.

These men will come to hate. It will not be the Iraqis they hate. This we do not talk about.

It is hard to admit that one has been used. Some of the crippled will forever insist that the war was needed, that they were protecting their sisters from an Islamic invasion, or Vietnamese, or Chinese. Others will keep quiet and drink too much. Still others will read, grow older and wiser—and bitter. They will remember that their vice president, a man named Cheney, said that during his war, the one in Asia, he "had other priorities." The veterans will remember this

when everyone else has long since forgotten Cheney.

I once watched the first meeting between a young Marine from the South, blind, much of his face shot away, and his high-school sweetheart, who had come from Tennessee to Bethesda Naval Hospital to see him.

Hatred comes easily. There are wounds and there are wounds. A friend of mine spent two tours in Asia in that war now little remembered. He killed many people, not all of them soldiers. It is what happens in wars. The memory haunts him. Jack is a hard man from a tough neighborhood, quick with his fists, intelligent but uneducated—not a liberal flower vain over his sensitivity. He lives in Mexican bars few would enter and has no politics beyond an anger toward government. He was not a joyous killer. He remembers what he did, knows now that he was had. It gnaws at him. One is wise to stay away from him when he is drinking.

THEY WILL REMEMBER THAT **THEIR VICE PRESIDENT**, A MAN NAMED CHENEY, SAID THAT DURING HIS WAR, THE ONE IN ASIA, HE "**HAD OTHER PRIORITIES.**"

People say that this war isn't like Vietnam. They are correct. Washington fights its war in Iraq with no better understanding of Iraq than it had of Vietnam, but with much better understanding of the United States. The Pentagon learned from Asia. This time around it has controlled the press well. Here is the great lesson of Southeast Asia: the press is dangerous, not because it is inaccurate, which it often is, but because it often isn't. So we don't much see the caskets—for reasons of privacy, you understand.

The war in Iraq is fought by volunteers, which means people that no one in power cares about. No one in the mysteriously named "elite" gives a damn about some kid from a town in Tennessee that

has one gas station and a beer hall with a stuffed buck's head. Such a kid is a red-neck at best, pretty much from another planet, and certainly not someone you would let your daughter date. If conscription came back, and college students with rich parents learned to live in fear of The Envelope, riots would blossom as before. Now Yale can rest easy. Thank God for throwaway people.

The nearly perfect separation between the military and the rest of the country, or at least the influential in the country, is wonderful for the war effort. It prevents concern. How many people with a college degree even know a soldier? Yes, some, and I will get e-mail from them, but they are a minority. How many Americans have been on a military base? Or, to be truly absurd, how many men in combat arms went to, say, Harvard? Ah, but they have other priorities.

In 15 years in Washington, I knew many, many reporters and intellectuals and educated people. Almost none had

worn boots. So it is. Those who count do not have to go, and do not know anyone who has gone, and don't interest themselves. There is a price for this, though not one Washington cares about. Across America, in places where you might not expect it—in Legion halls and VFW posts, among those who carry membership cards from the Disabled American Veterans—there are men who hate. They don't hate America. They hate those who sent them. Talk to the wounded from Iraq in five years. ■

*Fred Reed's writing has appeared in the Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Harper's, and National Review, among other places.*

# Old Europe's New Right

Muslim immigration galvanizes the continent's nationalist parties.

By Paul Gottfried

ON NOV. 9, the Belgian high court, alarmed by growing dissatisfaction with Islamic immigration, disbanded the Vlaams Blok, the largest party in Flanders and the second largest in Belgium. In April, a Belgian appellate court in Ghent had extended its condemnation of a "crime of opinion" by party members to the entire party after Vlaams Blok officials played up the higher crime rates among Muslim immigrants than among the Christian population in Flemish cities. Though their statistics were not contested, under EU and European national laws dealing with "incitement" against religious, ethnic, and lifestyle minorities, truth is not an excuse. What matters is not allowing the majority population to ruffle the feelings of immigrants. When the Flemish anti-immigrationists violated this propriety, criminal prosecution followed.

The Vlaams Blok is not the only right-wing populist party in western and central Europe to achieve prominence by expressing concern about Muslim immigration. Others include the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs in Austria, the Lega Nord in northern Italy, the Republikaner and the NDP in Germany, the National Fronts in France and England, Alsace d'Abord in Strasbourg, and the sundry People's Parties in Scandinavia.

Such parties champion the historic identity of their peoples and complain loudly about political globalization. But an anti-immigration stance provides the *leitmotiv*. It is the catalyst for electoral organization, a vehicle for other grievances, and by now the presupposition

for a right-wing European movement. Parties that have built on this theme are enjoying increasing prominence in European politics.

Since 2003, chemical industrialist Christoph Blocher, head of the anti-immigration Democratic Union of the Center, has been president of the Swiss Federal Council, which functions as the Swiss executive. Blocher in his inaugural address stressed the perils of "bureaucratic government insulated against everyday reality" and particularly highlighted widespread concern about the destruction of Swiss identity. His fellow anti-immigration populist Karen Jespersen became Danish minister of the interior in 2000, while in the same year the FPÖ in Austria entered the federal cabinet, despite protests from European left-of-center governments and warnings from then Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and National Security Adviser Sandy Berger. While Jespersen came out of the Socialist Party, which she once led, and still advocates an extensive welfare state, other populist leaders in Austria, Italy, and Switzerland favor free-market economies. Yet the immigration issue seems to override these differences.

France affords an instructive, if perhaps not representative, example of anti-immigrationist politics. Within a radius of about 50 miles of Marseilles, which has been overwhelmed by North African immigrants, voters from all social classes have helped to elect Front National candidates to municipal councils and in some small towns to mayoralties. Unlike

the communist mayors who took over cities in northern Italy's Red Belt in the '60s and '70s and went out of their way not to make waves, Front National officials often work to dramatize their differences with the political class. Catherine Mégret, the wife of Front National leader Jean-Marie Le Pen's former lieutenant Bruno Mégret, was dragged into court on human-rights charges after she offered to subsidize the birth of children belonging to French couples but not to North African Muslims.

These developments, however, must be understood in context. The immigration rate in most European countries is far below that of the United States. In Italy, foreign-born residents are still under 3 percent, as compared to almost 7 percent in France and 10 percent in the U.S. Only Belgium, Germany, and Austria approach the American rate. Yet anti-immigrationism is gathering strength as an electoral issue, and one evident reason is the growing preponderance of Muslims—who bring with them an alien culture and social problems—among the recent immigrants. The question that must be asked is whether this anti-immigration movement would have gained traction if successive waves of Muslim immigration had not occurred.

There is reason to doubt that it would have, since the movement of European populations did not pose the same cultural and social challenges as the settlement of Muslims. Although parties like Italy's Lega Nord and its predecessor the Lega Lombarda sprang up partly as a reaction against migrating Sicilians, who

made up a high proportion of those living on welfare in the north, European immigrants did not send the murder and vandalism rates in London, Amsterdam, and Paris soaring above those of New York. They did not engage in anti-Western terrorism or assassinate those who offended their religious views, as happened to the literary celebrity Theo van Gogh in Hol-

a national culture for German schools that is not very national, combining reading skills with lectures on German democracy. And the Christian Democrats would not likely be going even this far to absorb Third World immigrants were they not afraid of losing votes to "right-wing extremist" parties. The Republikaner on their right, led by the

to Austrian national party, while Blocher's went from being a movement centered in the canton of Zurich to a Swiss federal amalgamation of parties. Although periodic attempts to bring all "democratic rightists" into active alliance in the European Parliament have usually foundered, the leaders declare solidarity with their fellow fighters against the same dangers.

Arguably the political unit to be defended by all of these populist parties is what they can hope to separate from left-wing bureaucratic and multicultural structures. In France, where the national idea is still relatively intact, the Right can appeal to members of a once unified nation-state against an alien culture and a denaturing international administration. In Belgium and Austria, both artificial states created in the wake of disintegrating empires, the populist Right operates under a regionalist banner.

The established view is that European populist movements depend on charismatic figures. Illustrations of these master orators (or putative fascist demagogues) are Jean-Marie Le Pen and the Lega Nord's Umberto Bossi, who are known for their stem-winders and utter contempt for leftist cant. The governor of the Austrian province of Carinthia, Jörg Haider, typifies a youthful version of the same tendency, combining photogenic appeal and athletic prowess with eloquent defenses of Austrian identity. Yet contrary to the misconception about populist leadership, anti-immigrationist parties in Switzerland, Denmark, and Flanders have flourished under less than spellbinding celebrities. They have made do with a corporate executive, a middle-aged housewife, and a thirty-something journalist. Most often issues trump or survive those who lead these parties.

Perhaps the most celebrated right-wing European intellectual of my generation, Alain de Benoist, began his activist

## IN FRANCE, WHERE THE NATIONAL IDEA IS STILL RELATIVELY INTACT, THE RIGHT CAN APPEAL TO MEMBERS OF A ONCE UNIFIED NATION-STATE AGAINST AN ALIEN CULTURE.

land. Turmoil and escalating violence have accompanied the Muslim influx into Europe, and right-wing populists have not been diffident in pointing this out.

Their job is made easier by the mendacity of Eurocrats trying to justify social engineering. The economic reasons cited for wholesale Islamic immigration into Europe are usually threadbare excuses for the promotion of diversity. When Christian Democratic Union chief Angela Merkel suggested in September that it would be a good idea to bring to Germany 20,000 "non-European Union high-skill workers," to help the national economy, few German journalists would explain the facts: given an unemployment rate above 10 percent, it is unlikely that native workers, or non-German Europeans, could not have been found for these jobs.

Although both the assassination of van Gogh and the discovery of a Turkish Islamicist terror network in Germany have sent Merkel backtracking, right-wing pressures are also pushing her and her party into taking less predictable stands. Merkel is dusting off a plan that one of her advisors drew up four years ago to teach a German "dominant culture" as a means of assimilating foreigners. But being a member of an ostentatiously guilt-ridden and demographically dwindling nation, Merkel is prescribing

physician-attorney Rolf Schlierer, is occupying the right-center ground that Merkel's party abandoned in its slide leftward. Since the Christian Democrats and their Bavarian allies, the Christian Social Union, have not been successful in getting the German courts to close down the NDP on their right, they have had to recognize, as Merkel did when speaking at a party gathering on Nov. 21, that "multiculturalism has been a grandiose failure." But in terms of policy her recognition is still unclear.

The distinction in western and central Europe between nationalist and regionalist parties on the populist Right is less important than is sometimes imagined. In fact, a shared dislike for leftist politicians and multicultural ideology has led to limited co-operation between defenders and would-be dividers of European nation-states. The Front National in France stresses national unity and looks back to the French monarchs who helped put together *L'hexagone*, the shape of modern France. Nonetheless, Le Pen and other Front leaders have maintained cordial relations and exchanged congratulatory letters with Flemish regionalists, the Lega Nord, and Jörg Haider's regionally based FPÖ. After all, some national populist parties began as regional ones. Haider's party went from being a Carinthian regionalist



career as a monarchist close to those who had supported the wartime Vichy government of Marshal Pétain. His family had ties to the Catholic nationalist Right, and although in his later life he became fiercely anti-Christian and neopagan, Benoist has continued to criticize the Enlightenment, whose abstract universals, he maintains, led to the blood-bath of the French Revolution. In Benoist's worldview, anti-Americanism has supplanted the traditional right-wing position of anti-communism. From the 1980s on, his major periodicals have been full of tirades against all things American, from New England Puritans, American intervention in European struggles, American commerce, and most recently the "empire with clay feet" that has launched wars in the Third World. In the '80s, the diminutive, soft-spoken Benoist attracted attention for his remark that he found Soviet uniforms less offensive than American fast food. He tried to reconfigure the Cold War as being mainly an American attempt to exploit Europe and the Third World economically. The Soviets came into this struggle only parenthetically, as a military empire that might be directed against what Benoist called "*l'ennemi principal*," namely, the United States.

Benoist has spent the last 25 years unsuccessfully trying to reconcile elements of the interwar European Right with the European Marxist and now post-Marxist Left. "Conservative revolutionary" and "revolutionary nationalist," both terms that belong to the pre-World War II Right, have honored places in his lexicon. At the same time, Benoist has tactically allied himself with the Communist Party and the Greens. He has also taken pains to separate himself from the "nationalist" Front National and other similar groups. He has outlined a regionalist plan for Europe that would not exclude further Third World immigration. European communitari-

### **The Pentagon is involved in a major disinformation campaign designed to intimidate Syria.**

The program employs the operating principle of the widely criticized and recently defunct Office of Strategic Influence, referred to as "perception management." Perception management has been resurrected by Undersecretary for Policy Doug Feith and is being implemented through selective leaks to the media about plans to launch strikes deep into Syria to interdict jihadi networks. There have been a number of public references by top U.S. officials suggesting a leading Syrian role in supporting and co-ordinating Iraqi Ba'athist insurgent operations, and President Bush has several times warned Syria to stop meddling in Iraq's internal affairs.

Syria's government has taken notice of the leaks and has demanded that imams discourage calls at Friday prayers for jihadis to go and fight in Iraq. It has also begun tightening border security in an admittedly difficult to police region and appears to be cracking down on Islamists perceived as a potential internal threat. Sixteen Sunni clerics were arrested in early December for recruiting jihadi volunteers, and several Islamist fighters who fought in Iraq and returned home have been detained.

The Pentagon's claims regarding the influence of foreign fighters on the Iraqi insurgency have been generally exaggerated, judging by the small numbers of foreign Arabs and Iranians that have actually been captured or killed in action. Of Iraq's four Arab neighbors, only Syria is being singled out for blame, even though a larger percentage of the identified foreign jihadis have entered from Jordan, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia.

The problem with the Pentagon's perception management is that it deliberately disseminates misleading information through the American media that then is picked up by global news sources, contaminating the information cycle. The program is being conducted with some circumspection now, tailored specifically toward Syria, but some officials at the Pentagon are concerned that it will be expanded.



### **The United States is putting pressure on Tel Aviv to block the return to China of Harpy attack drones sold to Beijing in the 1990s and currently being upgraded by the Israeli defense industries.**

The drones contain no U.S. technology, but the Pentagon claims that the sale was carried out in secret, involving very sophisticated weapons that could easily be used against the United States. Doug Feith has been leading the offensive to stop the return of the drones and has called for the resignation of Amos Yaron, the Israeli Defense Ministry's director general, for failure to keep the Pentagon informed of the sale. The Israelis have documentation that proves that Feith is mistaken but have not pressed their case energetically, possibly because they have often illegally sold U.S. military technology and do not wish to open that can of worms. Some believe that the complaint against Yaron is not intended to go anywhere and is designed to defuse possible criticism of Feith's unseemly close relationship with Israel's Likud government.

*Philip Giraldi, a former CIA Officer, is a partner in Cannistraro Associates, an international security consultancy.*

ans, we are led to think, would feel happier with Muslim and Hindu traditionalists than with those who have been influenced by American globalists.

Despite this outreach, Benoist's career has taken a dive. In the late '80s, the French multicultural Left pressured *Le Figaro* into dropping his columns and in 1992 published an "Appeal to Vigilance" in *Le Monde* that targeted Benoist's no longer very new Nouvelle Droite. Benoist has suffered increasing ostracism as a *fascisant* while courting the anti-American Left and distancing himself from anti-immigrationists.

Similar problems have plagued the Italian "postfascist" head of the Alleanza Nazionale, Gianfranco Fini, who started off on the ultra-nationalist Right. Because of Fini's association with a party that enshrined Mussolini into the '60s and beyond, the head of the Alleanza has spent decades protecting his left flank. In the last two years, he has apologized several times for the Holocaust (a crime in which neither he nor his family was remotely implicated) and has endorsed Third World immigration.

Benoist and Fini have been caught between two stools, unable to move from an antediluvian Latin fascism into a modernized European Right. A time lag also afflicts Germany's National Democratic Party, which has been picking up votes in Thuringia, Saxony, and Brandenburg. This right-wing party and its new ally, the DVP (Deutsche Volkspartei), have captured upwards of 10 percent of the votes in regions of the former German Democratic Republic. They happily serve as the nationalist alternative to the reconstructed East German Communist Party, which garnered more than three times as many votes as the NDP in the German provincial elections in September. The electoral returns of the NDP drove to distraction Socialist interior minister Otto Schily and the head of the Central Com-

mittee of Jews in Germany, Paul Spiegel: both have called for a ban on right-wing "xenophobic parties."

Neither Spiegel nor Schily has to stay up nights worrying about the NDP. Though youthful party members have clashed with Muslim militants in Berlin, the NDP is no more critical of immigration than other right-wing populist parties. So far it has done nothing more on this issue than call for restrictions on further immigration and for "forcibly Germanizing" the predominantly Turkish Muslim population in German cities.

There is a difference between this archaic European Right and one that adapts without ceasing to appeal to the anti-establishment. This second model is the one doing well in Europe, despite the fact that Bossi in Milan and Haider in Austria have harmed their careers with personal blunders. The type of party they constructed in the '70s and '80s can exploit both the ideological fixations of the multicultural Left and the avoidance of hard stands by the acquiescent center. And as long as cultural and social clashes between Europeans and Third World Muslims go on, these parties can count on the votes of those who feel most threatened. Thus the new populists have amassed from a fifth to a quarter of the votes in federal elections in Belgium, Switzerland, Austria, Holland, and Denmark and far more in certain regional elections in France, Germany, Italy, and Norway. They have also taken their place in national governments and in the Italian and Danish cases have brought about at least part of the immigration reform they advocate.

Equally important, most European countries have multiparty systems, which redound to the Right's benefit. This is not the case in England, which has had a flourishing anti-immigration movement but also the equivalent of the American two-party system. Thus an eloquent MP, who at the time was to

enter the next Conservative cabinet, Enoch Powell, destroyed his career by giving a speech in April 1968 about the contradiction between English stability and Third World immigration. Although Powell gave this speech in a country that did not have to agonize over a Nazi past and was considered the cradle of Western constitutional liberty, he might as well have spoken his bitter truths in Berlin. The very establishment leader of the opposition, Edward Heath, vowed that the brilliant classicist and monetarist economist would never hold national office. And Powell never did. The present English National Front, which combines Powell's immigration views with intermittent racist positions, has trouble, outside of the ethnically divided Manchester area, pulling up its vote above the low teens. The Front does not have the resources to replace either national party and in the English electoral system cannot have an impact proportionate to its votes.

America's old rightists would likely feel comfortable in a European proportionate system where they would not always have to choose between the "lesser of two evils." In a contest among multiple candidates and multiple parties, the electoral adversaries of Islamic immigration and the political establishment that pushes it can climb into municipal, regional, and federal positions.

It is not only Europe's cultural Right that is now resisting what French journalist Edgar Morin celebrates as "the European order becoming the disorder of a tumultuous work in progress." Opposition to this work in progress seems likely to grow larger, if European administrations refuse to rethink the present forced march into diversity. ■

*Paul Gottfried is professor of humanities at Elizabethtown College and the author of Multiculturalism and the Politics of Guilt.*

# Arts & Letters

## FILM

[*Million Dollar Baby*]

### Eastwood's Girl in Gloves

By Steve Sailer

CLINT EASTWOOD'S sentimental, old-fashioned boxing movie "*Million Dollar Baby*" arrived accompanied by such a chorus of critical hosannas that, sadly, moviegoers have little chance to discover its modest pleasures for themselves.

Despite Eastwood's limited gifts as a visual artist (which aren't helped by his being such a tightwad of a producer), reviewers worship him as a director because his 25 films are readily analyzable within the *auteur* theory, that system of intellectualized hero worship espoused by critics to make film history seem less chaotic than it really is.

In "*Million Dollar Baby*," Eastwood directs and stars as a grouchy Irish Catholic widower with the standard-issue heart of gold. Each morning, before checking in at The Hit Pit, the dilapidated L.A. gym he owns, he attends Mass to ask forgiveness for somehow driving away his only daughter.

The film is narrated portentously by the gym's wise and saintly old black janitor, played by—you guessed it—Morgan Freeman. This superb actor has long complained that, although he first broke through as a vicious pimp in 1987's "*Street Smart*," the public now won't let him play anything besides what Richard Brookhiser calls the "Numinous

Negro." But he has only himself to blame for taking this role, a near-parody of the overly familiar Morgan Freeman Character.

A perky Irish-American waitress, conveniently missing a father, shows up at the gym and asks Eastwood to train her. After some gruff dismissals, Eastwood finally takes her on and turns her into the #1 contender, but the heartwarming main story is the father-daughter bond they forge.

Willowy starlet Hilary Swank, an Oscar-winner for "*Boys Don't Cry*," isn't exactly convincing as a boxer (the fight scenes are shown in slightly fast motion to make her look quicker), but her exuberant presence is a delight. We never learn why such a cheerful, attractive lady wants to beat up other women because when the ham-fisted script by Paul Haggis isn't telegraphing its emotional roundhouse punches, it's leaving much else unexplained.

In reality, women's boxing is a pseudo-feminist trash sport that briefly flourished in the 1990s when impresario Don King noticed that Mike Tyson fans got some kind of weird kick out of preliminary catfights between battling babes.

Traditionally, society objected to women brawling because (to paraphrase the answer the shady doctor in "*Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*" gives to the question of whether his memory erasure technique can cause brain damage), "Technically speaking, boxing *is* brain damage."

If a man gets his head caved in during some pointless scrap, well, some other man will just have to step in and do double duty carrying on the species. But women are the limiting scarce resource in making babies, so each woman lost lowers the overall reproductive capacity.

That kind of proto-sociobiological reasoning is unthinkable today, but a feminist utopia hasn't arrived. Instead, men employ gender equality slogans to badger women into doing things guys enjoy.

Still, female fisticuffs have faded recently due to the supply-side problem of finding enough low-cost opponents for the handful of women stars. While the number of male palookas who will fight for next to nothing in the hope of becoming Rocky Balboa is ample, managers needing fresh meat for their female champs to bash frequently have to hire hookers and strippers to take dives—and working girls don't work for free.

"*Million Dollar Baby*" simply ignores all this and asks you to believe that women's boxing today is a thriving duplicate of the men's fight game of half a century ago, which allows Eastwood to make a 1955-style boxing movie. This offers some almost-forgotten pay-offs, but Eastwood doesn't have the courage to make a genuinely out-of-fashion film.

When his protégé gets her neck broken by a dirty fighter, she asks him to kill her rather than make her live as a quadriplegic. His priest explains the Church is utterly opposed to euthanasia, which in a 1955 movie would have been the end of it. If, however, "*Million Dollar Baby*" had concluded with Eastwood's character helping her to find some new meaning in life, as Christopher Reeve's wife did for the "*Superman*" star, the reviewers would have lambasted it as TV-movie fare. So to the wild applause of the critics, he poisons her.

But the obvious question is left hanging: without his surrogate daughter to care for, what meaning will his life have for him? ■

## BOOKS

[*The Jewish Century*, Yuri Slezkine, Princeton University Press, 344 pages]

## Chosen People

By Albert S. Lindemann

YURI SLEZKINE has composed a remarkable book that does not easily fit into familiar categories—Right or Left, scholarly or popular, apologetic or polemical. Similarly, it is difficult to capture its peculiar style and tone, which draw imaginatively from history, mythology, and literature of diverse varieties. The book is full of provocative *aperçus* and unfamiliar, often disquieting details—calmly sophisticated on the one hand, yet curiously uninhibited, prone to quips that may provoke bouts of hyperventilation on the part of some readers. (Terming Communist Jews “Stalin’s Willing Executioners” will probably not please admirers of Daniel Jonah Goldhagen’s *Hitler’s Willing Executioners*.) The prose in places has a lyrical quality closer to passages of Nietzsche than to modern works of scholarly history. Any effort to summarize *The Jewish Century* is thus doomed to failure, or at least to providing a false impression of the whole. Still one aspect stands out: so many stale certainties about the Jewish past here encounter a bracing breath of fresh air, especially those having to do with the origin and nature of modern anti-Semitism.

Readers familiar with Jewish history are likely to sense an immediate problem, if not a provocation, in a book entitled *The Jewish Century*. The classic works of anti-Semitism in the 19th century have similar titles: *The Jews*, *Kings of the Epoch* (Alphonse de Toussenel); *The Victory of Jews over Germany* (Wilhelm Marr); *Jewish France* (Edouard Drumont). In them is found the lament that the Jews, through the new power of

money in industrializing Europe, have gradually come to rule the modern world. So too is found the related charge that Jewish values are corrupting that world, a key theme in Karl Marx’s notorious *On the Jewish Question*, in which Jewishness and capitalist greed are equated. “Jewified” subsequently became one of the more toxic of the abusive epithets used by anti-Semites.

On the other hand, a vast celebratory literature has appeared, mostly of a non-scholarly nature, around the theme of “How did we Jews get so wonderful?” That literature parallels in many of its topics the very concerns of the anti-Semites—Jewish millionaires, financiers, journalists, revolutionaries, intellectuals, advisers to the powerful—though obviously giving a radically different twist to them, indeed often addressing them specifically to refute what anti-Semites have written.

The question arises: why would a scholar—and make no mistake, Slezkine, Professor of History at Berkeley, is a scholar of unusual talents—resort to such vague language given its often odious associations? *The Jewish Century* is characterized throughout by soaring generalizations and playfully allusive, ambiguous language of a sort that is fairly common in non-scholarly contexts. When the editors of *Le Monde* proclaimed, after Sept. 11, “We are all Americans now!” most Americans were touched—and not prone to complain about the inflated and imprecise rhetoric. Humpty Dumpty in *Through the Looking Glass* famously declared, “A word means what I want it to mean.” What then does Yuri Slezkine want “Jew” to mean?

Well, to begin with, if you define “Jew” in his way, then there are a helluva lot of Jews out there: the Chinese, the Indians, Greeks, the Yankees, to say nothing of the Armenians, Lebanese, or Ibos. Slezkine alternately uses the term “service nomads” for these many “Jews,” but most often he terms them “Mercurians,” as contrasted with the “Apollonians” of the world. Why not just choose one term, define it carefully, and stick

with it? That is a reasonable question, but it must be admitted that a book entitled *The Century of the Service Nomads* (or *the Mercurians*) might not get all that much attention.

Slezkine’s basic point may seem familiar enough: the values of the most successful modern nations and peoples resemble those that have been cultivated by Europe’s Jews for several thousand years, values that have also been termed “modern.” Related and also familiar is the observation that the Chinese are the Jews of Southeast Asia, the Indians the Jews of East Africa. Slezkine takes such observations and runs with them, noting that Europe’s leading states became Jewish and world powers in modern times, which meant that the Jews of Europe were Jews among Jews—an unusually successful and influential group, perhaps without precedent. (“No group has been better at being Jewish than the Jews themselves.”) Again, the distinctions between mercantile, urban, sophisticated people (Mercurians) and the traditional, boorish people of the land (Apollonians) are also familiar, although perhaps not in all the aspects that Slezkine describes as Jewish and modern: “mobile, literate, articulate, intellectually intricate, physically fastidious, and occupationally flexible ... [cultivating] people and symbols, not fields or herds.”

But Europe’s Jews were hardly secure in their triumphs. One of the most ominous charges against them in modern times—and one that Jewish apologists, especially in the United States, have passionately combated—has been that they have everywhere fomented unrest and revolution, as one aspect of their status as outsiders, dissenters, and destroyers. Already by the late 19th century it had become almost a truism that Jews played a significant role in the revolutionary movements of the day, one vastly disproportionate to their small numbers (about one percent of the total European population, though very unevenly distributed from country to country). That belief was especially embraced by conservatives, even in Britain, where Jews



faced less hostility than on the Continent. Benjamin Disraeli, himself of Jewish origin, considered the Jews a superior race, historically helping to lift Europe out of barbarism, but he also quipped that virtually all of the leaders of revolutionary movements were Jews. Churchill, also drawing from both philo- and anti-Semitic themes, intoned, “this mystic and mysterious race has been chosen for the supreme manifestation of both the divine and diabolical .... [Jews have been] the mainspring of every subversive movement during the 19th century. ... [They have now] gripped the Russian people by the hair of their heads and have become practically the undisputed masters of that enormous empire.”

Jewish apologists, especially during the Cold War but also during the interwar period, were intent on combating the notion that Jews were somehow naturally connected to social decay and revolution because those were key themes of the Nazi movement. In an interview with an American reporter, Hitler defended the anti-Semitic Nuremberg Laws as an act of national self-defense, claiming that “nearly all Bolshevik agitators and agents of Bolshevism” in Germany were Jews; they had “flooded the intellectual professions,” and had a “disintegrating effect” on all aspects of public life. The Nazis similarly asserted that the Soviet Union was in the hands of Jews.

One of the most striking aspects of Slezkine’s book is the evidence it offers that there was far more truth to those assertions than has been generally recognized by respectable opinion in the Western world since World War II. To be sure, a number of scholars have explored the Jewish role in both pre- and post-revolutionary Russia (including this reviewer), but few have presented matters in quite the unblinking way Slezkine does, nor have they assembled such detailed evidence in support of the contention that the ruling class of Soviet Russia was in essence “Jewish”—far more Jewish in terms of real people occupying leading positions in state and society than the rest of Europe or the United States.

It has been close to an article of faith that Stalin’s rise and the purges associated with his rule hit Jewish party leaders with special force and that anti-Semitism became a pervasive reality in Russia after the mid-1930s. Prejudice against Jews was allegedly responsible not only for their being purged but for blocking them from positions of importance or authority. Slezkine presents evidence in impressive variety and detail that Jews were actually under-represented among those arrested and sentenced to death or deportation in the purges, and that, moreover, they prospered under Stalin. Soviet Russia from 1917 until the final years of Stalin’s rule was “good for the Jews,” in Slezkine’s words, “the only real paradise for Jews.” Jews were over-represented, often remarkably so, in such categories as the secret police (“one of the most Jewish of all Soviet institutions”), the press, and the arts. Serving as spies in western Europe and the United States was almost exclusively in the hands of Jews and Jewish contacts in the countries being spied upon (the Rosenbergs were,

Soviet Russia’s first half century, he observes, looked down upon Americans; being sent to America as a diplomat was considered a hardship because of the gross materialism, vulgarity, and spiritual emptiness of the lives of Americans (judgments, it should be noted, that were shared by a considerable proportion of western Europe’s Jewish intelligentsia, left- or right-wing, in the same years).

In these and other ways, Slezkine breaks with what has been termed *Leidensgeschichte* (“suffering history”), the inclination to conceptualize the history of Jews as an interminable tale of suffering and injustice at the hands of the morally corrupt Goyim. In such history Jews attain the stature of tragic victims who are not to be subjected to critical scrutiny. (Any such efforts are likely to be considered mean-spirited.) Slezkine also includes little *Gelehrten-geschichte*, the history of great Jewish intellectuals of the sort that honors rather than critically evaluates. Slezkine seems little interested in the great rabbis and the religious controversies that shook the

# COMMUNIST JEWS IN SOVIET RUSSIA'S FIRST HALF CENTURY LOOKED DOWN UPON AMERICANS; BEING SENT TO AMERICA AS A DIPLOMAT WAS CONSIDERED A HARDSHIP BECAUSE OF THE GROSS MATERIALISM, VULGARITY, AND SPIRITUAL EMPTINESS OF THE LIVES OF AMERICANS.

so to speak, mere faces in a Jewish crowd). The Gulag was headed by ethnic Jews from 1930, when it was formed, until November 1938, when the Great Terror was almost over.

Slezkine’s lack of apologetic instincts in regard to Jews and communism shows up in striking ways: “Communism was not an exclusively or even predominantly Jewish religion, but of the Jewish religions of the first half of the 20th century, it was by far the most important: more vibrant than Judaism, much more popular than Zionism, and incomparably more viable, as a faith, than liberalism.” Communist Jews in

Jewish world in modern times, nor does he seem much concerned with the historiographical forays that are considered *de rigueur* in scholarly works. (He obviously knows the historical literature but has decided to devote little space to addressing it explicitly.)

At any rate, in Slezkine’s account Jews do not emerge primarily as passive victims but as historical actors—indeed as victors (as well, of course, as tragic losers, but the two, in his view, are not unrelated). Similarly, Slezkine seems little impressed with—or at least scarcely addresses—the arguments of those who say that Jews were hated “for

no reason" or that anti-Semitism in the 19th and 20th centuries was a self-generating passion of the twisted non-Jewish psyche that had nothing to do with what Jews really were (the oft-repeated phrase, "anti-Semitism is not a Jewish Problem but a Gentile Problem" comes to mind). Quite the contrary, Slezkine argues that hatred of Jews, as of other Mercurians throughout history, has had everything to do with what they really were and did.

That hatred had to do with the fact that Jews were oppressors, not only oppressed, victimizers, not only victims; Communist Jews in Russia were so intoxicated by Communist ideology, so persuaded that they were on the right side of history, that they actively participated in despotic measures, finally mass murder—and felt morally superior in doing so. (To be sure, they did so not as Jews but as Communists, but nonetheless they were still identified as Jews, both by non-Jews and other Jews.)

Slezkine devotes many fascinating pages to descriptions of how Communist Jews, especially those in the ranks of the secret police, came to harden their hearts, to reject sympathy for "class enemies" as a fatal weakness. The traditional Jewish virtue of *rachmones* (pity) was replaced by the morality of the Leninist "hard," the merciless "willing executioner" for whom the goal of protecting the revolution transcended all else.

The belief that behavior of Jews is the main reason for the hostility they have faced was actually widespread long before the Bolshevik Revolution. The corollary that the reform of Jewish behavior, as well as Jewish religion, was necessary to curb anti-Semitism was earnestly embraced by both Jews and non-Jews in the 19th century. But the persistence of Jew-hatred and the seeming irrelevance of Jewish reform gradually broke down the confidence of reformers; some even concluded that reform only stoked anti-Semitism. Again, "blaming the victim" for anti-Semitism came to be ever more rejected—to the extent, especially after the Nazi experience, that a contrary tendency emerged and finally prevailed, an implicit claim that Jewish victims (and finally all victims) should never be held responsible for anything that happens to them. Period.

Such claims cannot withstand serious scrutiny and have emerged more as a popular mood, no doubt encouraged by a few intellectuals or pseudo-intellectuals and associated lobbying agencies of diverse sorts. Zionists have never much embraced these claims, at least not those Zionists who followed Herzl in the belief that the character of "Galut Jews" had been so deeply corrupted over the centuries that they had become "objectively detestable" and would remain so until they abandoned the lands of the Goyim and become masters of their own land. They too, especially the followers of Jabotinsky's Revisionists, were prone to embracing an ethic of hardness, not Leninist but more in conformity to Goethe's famous lines, "You must be

master and win, or serve and lose, grieve or triumph, be the anvil or the hammer."

The magnetic field generated by the establishment of the state of Israel extended well into the Soviet Union, and here also Slezkine offers some unblinking observations. The anti-Semitism that emerged there after World War II had less to do with baseless fantasies about Jews than the quite real issue of their dual loyalty. In the U.S. the notion of Jewish dual loyalty has long been dismissed as an anti-Semitic canard—though the neocons have recently given new life to the charge—but in the case of Soviet citizens of Jewish identity, their growing belief that Israel was their real homeland, not the Soviet Union, fed suspicion, as did their growing admiration for the United States.

The most thought-provoking sections of *The Jewish Century* have to do with Jews as Communists, but what Slezkine has to say about Jews in Israel and America is characterized by a kindred "but-the-king-has-no-clothes" instinct as far as many general beliefs are concerned. It seems almost certain that the so-called "new anti-Semites" of the Islamic world will snatch snippets of this complex and subtle book for less than subtle purposes. The inevitable scholarly qualifications, rectifications, cavils, and complaints—almost certainly a few very angry ones—will be expressed, but this book promises to be seen in future years as a marker of a sea change in historical understanding in the United States and Europe of what used to be termed the Jewish Question. Like many such markers, Slezkine's book is best described as a culmination rather than a dramatic break, more an imaginative synthesis of what other scholars have been doing than something completely original, but, to repeat the opening line of this review, it is a remarkable book. ■

*Albert S. Lindemann is Professor of History at the University of California, Santa Barbara and the author of Anti-Semitism Before the Holocaust and Esau's Tears.*

## MOVING?

### Changing your address?

Simply go to **The American Conservative** website, [www.amconmag.com](http://www.amconmag.com). Click "subscribe" and then click "address change."

To access your account make sure you have your TAC mailing label. You may also subscribe or renew online.

If you prefer to mail your address change send your TAC label with your new address to:

**The American Conservative**  
Subscription Department  
P.O. Box 9030  
Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030

[*The Politically Incorrect Guide to American History*, Thomas E. Woods Jr., Regnery, 256 pages]

# Righting History

By Roger D. McGrath

A NONFICTION BESTSELLER during the month of December, *The Politically Incorrect Guide to American History* is a long overdue correction to the historical revisionism that has dominated academe for the last 30 years. Thomas Woods writes with a style and verve that makes the *Guide* come alive and appear anything but a textbook. Nonetheless, the *Guide* is a text that focuses on issues in American history that have been omitted from or insidiously misrepresented in the cultural Marxist version of history that is taught in universities today.

That Woods's book has made such a big splash is both gratifying and disheartening—gratifying because a factual, insightful, and formerly traditional perspective is being widely read by the general public and disheartening because such a perspective has been all but banned from the universities that educate our children. Most of the topics discussed by Woods and his perspective are familiar to readers of *The American Conservative* but are sadly all but unknown to those who have suffered through the politically correct dogma of schooling in today's America. To those who have not had the good fortune to have been subscribers to *TAC* or *Chronicles* or the *National Review* of old, the *Guide* will serve as a primer that will equip them to do battle with the propagators of politically correct nonsense.

From Chapter 1 on the colonial origins of American liberty to Chapter 18 on Bill Clinton, Woods's work will shock the sensibilities and orthodoxies of the leftist rulers of academe. He is careful to provide the reader with a chapter-by-chapter bibliography of books "You're Not Supposed to Read," sources that discuss

the particular chapter issues in far greater depth. Such recommendations remind me of how I was exposed to a number of excellent books as an undergrad. One professor would regularly and vehemently denounce specific works of American history during his lectures. After each lecture I would hurry to the library to check out the book attacked that day. I was stunned at how much I learned from reading those books that no student was supposed to read.

The diversity myth is the first to fall to Woods's sharp pen. The colonies prospered not because the colonists were so diverse but because they were so similar. "Providence has been pleased to give this one connected country," said John Jay, "to one united people—a people descended from the same ancestors, speaking the same language, professing the same religion, attached to

THE COLONIES PROSPERED **NOT BECAUSE THE COLONISTS WERE SO DIVERSE BUT BECAUSE THEY WERE SO SIMILAR.**

the same principles of government, very similar in their manners and customs." While the Jay quotation and Woods's chapter theme will cause the politically correct to convulse, it will hardly please the neoconservatives. Same race, same language, same religion does not a "proposition nation" make.

Another assertion fondly embraced by America's Left claims that the Constitution is a "living, breathing document" that means merely what each generation chooses it to mean. Woods demonstrates that the Founding Fathers understood their English history and, as a consequence, insisted upon a written constitution that was amendable but not infinitely malleable. The attempt to twist the original intent and meaning of the Constitution is nowhere more apparent than in the bizarre constructions put on the Second Amendment by those who favor disarmament of the American citizenry. Since they know that it would be impossible to pass an amendment

repealing the Second Amendment, they have tried to have the courts change the meaning of "the right of the people." For reading on the issue Woods recommends a book that has become a minor classic, Stephen Halbrook's *That Every Man Be Armed: The Evolution of a Constitutional Right*.

Woods's discussion of the antebellum era and the "War Between the States" should again bring discomfort not only to the politically correct Left but also to the neocons. His views mirror those of, most recently, Thomas J. DiLorenzo and Joseph Sobran: under the Constitution the states had a right to secede; the war was not launched to free the slaves; slavery, for several reasons, would have collapsed within a generation; and Lincoln was a white supremacist who prosecuted an unjust war that consolidated federal power in Washington to a degree

unimaginable to the Founding Fathers. Woods quotes from a letter written by the British libertarian Lord Acton to Robert E. Lee in the fall of 1866:

I saw in States' rights the only availing check upon the absolutism of the sovereign will, and secession filled me with hope, not as the destruction but as the redemption of Democracy .... Therefore, I deemed that you were fighting the battles of our liberty, our progress, and our civilization, and I mourn for the stake which was lost at Richmond more deeply than I rejoice over that which was saved at Waterloo.

Woods also provides the reader with a delicious quote from H.L. Mencken. I recall my professors quoting Mencken liberally when he was attacking the American middle class or religion, but I cannot remember any professor quoting Mencken's comments on the Gettysburg

Address. While acknowledging the poetical power and beauty of the speech, Mencken saw a great irony and illogic in the address. Lincoln claimed that the war was all about self-determination—that a government of the people, by the people, for the people, should not perish from the earth—but, says Mencken, “It is difficult to imagine anything more untrue. The Union soldiers in the battle actually fought against self-determination; it was the Confederates who fought for the right of their people to govern themselves.”

If Woods’s discussion of Lincoln and the war will irk the politically correct and the neocons equally, so too will his presentation of World War I. Our current global interventionism is partly derived from Woodrow Wilson’s policies, something that most Republicans, once upon a time, abhorred. Woods acknowledges that scholarly opinion is greatly divided over blame for the war but he does cite Harry Elmer Barnes, who argued that of all the major belligerents Germany was the least responsible, and Niall Ferguson, who reasons that Britain was the principal instigator. Whatever the valid-

ity of these arguments, says Woods, it was absolutely not America’s war to fight. Allied propaganda was relentless and untrue—stories about German atrocities in Belgium were particularly effective and entirely fabricated—and Americans were slowly convinced that we must aid the allies. The Anglophilic Wilson, ignoring the illegitimate British naval blockade of Germany, the British mining of the North Sea, and British provocations in the Atlantic, pushed the United States, step by step, into the war. Wilson, meanwhile, framed his argument for going to war in terms of democracy and moral principles.

Better still is Woods’s discussion of Wilson’s actions at the treaty negotiations and his attempts at securing passage of the Treaty of Versailles by the U.S. Senate. Although the treaty repudiated many of Wilson’s Fourteen Points, Wilson crusaded for its passage like a man possessed. His statements concerning the treaty were wildly contrary to the facts, possibly because he saw the proposed League of Nations as the Second Coming. Anticipating the globalism of the last two decades, Wilson

declared that he looked forward to the day “when men would be just as eager partisans of the sovereignty of mankind as they were now of their own national sovereignty.” The highly punitive and unjust Treaty of Versailles failed ratification in the Senate but was approved by the Allies—and the stage was set for World War II.

Woods sees the Great Depression and Franklin Roosevelt through the eyes of John T. Flynn and his classic *The Roosevelt Myth* and Jim Powell in his recent *FDR’s Folly*. Not by accident, I suspect, Woods follows this discussion with a sharp analysis of Communist activities in America, the misconceptions most people hold about Joe McCarthy, the revelations of the Venona documents, and Stalin’s crimes. The last mentioned did nothing to stop FDR from putting the U.S. on a course for a war in which Stalin, a murderer of millions, would become “Uncle Joe,” our avuncular ally. Woods also looks at the aftermath of the war and reassesses the famous Marshall Plan.

The civil-rights movement of the 1960s is seen by Woods as largely a failure, which resulted in the importance of race not being diminished but exaggerated. Woods subjects JFK to criticism that was generally absent during his short presidency and exposes LBJ and the Great Society for the frauds that they were. Reagan’s so-called “Decade of Greed,” demonstrates Woods, was anything but and he skewers Clinton, not for his sexual peccadilloes, but for his foreign-policy blunders.

Before sending our children off to college we ensure that their immunizations are current and that they are informed of the dangers of drunk driving, abusing drugs, and entering parking structures alone at night. To this list of prophylactic measures should be added *The Politically Incorrect Guide to American History*. Consider the *Guide* as your child’s intellectual antidote to cultural Marxist indoctrination. ■

Roger D. McGrath is an historian in California and the author of *Gunfighters, Highwaymen and Vigilantes*.



“I’ve been all over the Internet, but nobody seems to know how many carbs are in a sock.”



[*Liberty and Freedom: A Visual History of America's Founding Ideas*, David Hackett Fischer, Oxford University Press, 851 pages]

## American Creed

By Ilana Mercer

IN 1843, 91-year-old Capt. Levi Preston was asked by a young historian why he had fought in the American Revolution. Was it the Stamp Act, the Tea Act, perhaps the treatises of John Locke? “No, sirree,” the captain countered. He had not seen any stamps, sipped any tea, or read anything other than the Bible, the catechism, and Watts’s Psalms. “What we meant in going for those Redcoats was this: we always had been free, and we meant to be always free. They didn’t mean we should.” Levi Preston is the archetypal American.

If asked whether their love of liberty was inspired by Greek democracy, Roman republicanism, natural rights, or the Enlightenment, Americans of every generation since Preston’s would have been as baffled as he. American affinity for liberty and freedom is rooted less in a familiarity with distant events and formal texts than in, as Alexis de Tocqueville observed, the “customs, beliefs, traditions, and folkways of free people.” “Love of liberty,” he wrote in *The Old Regime*, “defies analysis ... It is something one must feel, and logic has no part in it.” These enduring “habits of the heart” are the soul of David Hackett Fischer’s *Liberty and Freedom: A Visual History of America's Founding Ideas*.

The innate quality of his subject, however, has placed Fischer in a pickle. How was he best to advance the understanding of such a “sublime sentiment,” in Tocqueville’s words? And what was the point of mining manuscripts Captain Preston and his descendants had never read, alluding to events they

were unfamiliar with, or analyzing philosophical abstractions as good as Greek to them?

Instead, with passion and invention (and a whole lot of style), Fischer has produced an historical exegesis with a difference. Heeding Horace, who said that a picture is a poem without words, he has added poetry to the inscribed annals of America. Visions, images, and words combine to depict the “dynamic tension” between liberty and freedom in a chronicle of America that is anything but arcane. *Liberty and Freedom* surveys the stories and symbols, facts and artifacts by which the tale of America is told.

Fischer begins his inquiry with the distinction between “liberty” and “freedom.” Derived from an Indo-European root that means beloved, freedom denotes the “rights of belonging within a community of free people.” Liberty originated in the ancient Mediterranean and refers to “ideas of independence, separations, and autonomy for an individual or a group.” According to Fischer, the “dynamic tension” between “liberty-as-separation and freedom-as-belonging to a community of free people is unique to the English-speaking world.” Nowhere is this tension better expressed than in the various traditions of “order, power, freedom, and liberty” that developed in the New World.

The Revolutionary generation spoke of “liberty in its classical sense of separation.” There’s the Liberty Tree and its iconography. Its originators were a small club of Boston Whigs—The Loyal Nine—who hung on the original tree an

displayed the motto *libertas* and *otium*—liberty and leisure) also expressed powerful ideas of liberty, coexisting paradoxically with slavery.

Later, according to received opinion (which goes unchallenged by Fischer), the South went to war to preserve its peculiar institution. Dixie’s war iconography, however, is at odds with this view. The *casus belli* cited by the Levi Prestons south of the Mason-Dixon Line was the failure of the Yankees to “Let Us Alone” and allow the South “Liberty and Independence.” At least their emblems were so emblazoned. Robert E. Lee abhorred slavery and freed his own in 1862. Lee declared that he fought for the classical idea of liberty, including the idea of states’ rights.

General Lee was certainly in the “negative liberty” camp. Our author, by contrast, is most definitely in the “positive liberty” camp. As defined by Richard Pipes, negative rights are “the guarantees given to individuals that neither the state nor society will infringe on their life, liberty, and possessions.” Whereas a positive right is “the right to the necessities of life at public expense, i.e., the right to something that was not one’s own.” Fischer is of the view that liberty and freedom should expand and evolve: “Ancient and timeless principles” are better understood “as ever-changing modern ideas that derived their meaning from their relevance to the present and their promise for the future.”

Unfortunately, Fischer has rejected the distinction between positive and negative liberty as inadequate to the

DERIVED FROM A **ROOT THAT MEANS BELOVED**, FREEDOM DENOTES THE “RIGHTS OF BELONGING WITHIN A **COMMUNITY OF FREE PEOPLE.**”

effigy of “the moving spirit behind the Stamp Tax,” stampmaster Andrew Oliver. The Liberty Tree became the leading symbol of the patriot cause in New England and beyond. Virginia’s Declaration of Rights and its languidly controversial state seal (which, until Thomas Jefferson changed it in 1779,

task of historical investigation. One unintended consequence of this is to diminish the evils of slavery. Consider “Josiah Wedgwood’s antislavery medalion of an African in chains, who reached out to others and asked, ‘Am I Not a Man and a Brother?’” What a powerful symbol of the right to live

unenslaved. Yet by default, in Fischer's account, the right to live free is lumped in with an egalitarian litany of "causes" pursued by reformers, among them the causes of wealth and land redistribution and the establishment of "tax-supported common schools."

Fischer's aversion to the positive/negative distinction notwithstanding, it is precisely the fertility of thought in this book—the bold if subtle melding of history and political philosophy—that obligates him to provide his readers with a precise definition of what it means to enjoy freedom and liberty. Had the author confined his observations to dry-as-dust facts, he'd be exempt. Fortunately for his readers (as it makes for a good read), Fischer has the courage of his convictions: "Every American generation without exception has become more free," he declares. But asserting that Americans have come to enjoy greater liberty and freedom can't be substantiated absent some measure of the thing that is (allegedly) perpetually burgeoning. It was Fischer's duty to go beyond describing liberty and freedom merely as a dialectic between individual autonomy and the social contract. But he hasn't.

It was also incumbent on Fischer to explain how an expanding and expansive view of liberty results in greater lib-

erty and freedom for Americans. Particularly poignant to consider today is the Wilsonian missionary movement, the philosophical progenitor of George W. Bush's muscular democratic proselytizing. The author identifies World War I and Woodrow Wilson's highly authoritarian progressive administration as the dawn of a new vision of America as a world crusader for freedom, liberty, and democracy. In foreign policy, "The motives of the great republic were never pure ... But for better or for worse, large ideas of liberty and freedom were always near the center of American approaches to world affairs."

With the creation of the Committee on Public Information (circa 1917), and under the deft supervision of George Creel, the Karl Rove of his day, "Visions of liberty and freedom became tools of war ... The American war aims were converted into advertising slogans and broadcast on radio, fliers, and billboards." Images conjuring "conscripted freedom and regimented liberty" ("Get behind the Government" blared one typical dirigiste slogan) represent "ordered freedom," says Fischer. He argues that this "ordered freedom"—drafting individuals in the service of the greater good, the hallmark of the Wilson years—is not necessarily inimical to

individual rights, but can at times function as an instrument of their promotion. Once again, however, the author gives us no criteria by which to assess this vexed statement. His commitment to an ever-changing, relative definition of rights mars what is otherwise a triumph of a book.

The historicist approach to the study of liberty and freedom presents yet another problem. Any current practice or perspective is considered an organic extension of the American tradition of liberty and freedom. For example, Clinton's "ill-fated attempt to create a national health program" Fischer describes as part of a vision of a community of free people with universal rights. In that case, we share DNA with the former Soviet Union, North Korea, and Cuba. Surely political evolution, like biological evolution, can yield unhealthy mutations?

Trumping all the election post-mortems I've seen is Fischer's insight into the decisive factor in American elections. If the Jeffersonian Democrats from 1800 to 1824 and the Republican Party from 1860 to 1884 and today prove anything, it is that, "In American politics, victory always went to the parties and leaders with the strongest and clearest vision of liberty and freedom..." There is no doubt that George W. Bush won a second term because he sold Americans on a powerful narrative of freedom and liberty. But when did Americans become incapable of distinguishing rhetoric from reality?

Fischer claims our leaders are passionate defenders of a free society but have a narrow vision of freedom: "If a free society is ever destroyed in America, it will be done in the name of one particular vision of liberty and freedom," he warns. *Au contraire*. If our free society is ever destroyed, it will be because we have abandoned the eternal verities of republicanism and limited government. ■

*Ilana Mercer is a columnist for Anti-war.com and the author of Broad Sides: One Woman's Clash With a Corrupt Culture.*

**Subscribe to**

**The American Conservative**

**Today.**

Simply go to

**[www.amconmag.com](http://www.amconmag.com)**

and click "Subscribe"

or call

**1-800-579-6148**



# From Paris to Phuket



I spent Christmas and the New Year in Gstaad, high up in the Swiss Alps among the *nouveaux riches*, the vulgar, and—worst of all—Paris Hilton.

Gstaad used to be known as the Mecca of the rich and elegant, where young people with old money and old-fashioned manners hung out, as opposed to its chief Alpine rival, St. Moritz, where old people with new money were the rage.

This was back in the fifties, when I first discovered Gstaad. The place was full of dethroned royals, American ex-OSS men who had discovered its beauty while operating out of Geneva during World War II, and lots of European aristocrats fleeing the rich and vulgar who had invaded postwar St. Moritz. Oh yes, and lots of ex-Rosey students—Rosey being the world's most expensive prep school, once upon a time known as the School of Kings, now full of sons and daughters of Russian billionaire gangsters and Arab billionaire camel drivers. Our celebrities back then were Bill Buckley, Ken Galbraith, David Niven, Roger Moore, Yehudi Menuhin, Nathan Milstein, and others of their ilk. They've now been replaced by Miss Hilton—a bit like an ape taking over the great Menuhin's fiddle.

As bad luck would have it, it was a Greek who brought la Hilton along, the two of them accompanied by bodyguards and other slobs, arriving just about the time the mind-numbing devastation hit the Indian Ocean. Not that the horror prevented anyone from partying. This is not how the so-called beautiful people operate. What's 150,000 dead and five million homeless when one can make a very public beeline to the bathroom in full view of a packed nightclub, which la Hilton did time and again? (I got this info from friends, as I abstained from partying for a while.)

But I am being unfair. Is it Miss Hilton's fault that the ocean erupted? Was it something she did that caused cities to be demolished, landscapes to be ravished, and hundreds of thousands to die? The answer is obvious. Was she wrong to party while so many were suffering unspeakable pain? The answer to that one is, who am I to judge her? Thousands of years of theological speculation by the wisest of scholars has failed to offer any convincing reason for such an indiscriminate human tragedy. As Boris Johnson wrote, "There is one thing the whole planet wants, and that we cannot supply. We all want someone to blame."

Alas, there is no human factor in the disaster, certainly not the bad taste exhibited by Paris Hilton. Mind you, some will try. By ascribing some fault to human beings, we give God a pass, a psychologically satisfying feeling.

History teaches us that men used to blame other men for natural calamities. The ancient Greeks viewed catastrophes as divine punishment for bad human behavior. Then came the 18th century and the godless intellectuals. Anti-clerical philosophers like Voltaire used the Lisbon earthquake of 1755 to claim there was no God. In this they were successful. The secular rot and the French Revolution both incubated in the Lisbon disaster that killed 50,000 people. One could safely claim that that earthquake helped change European culture. If only it were that simple.

If God does not exist, we have no duties or obligations whatsoever, except to ourselves. In a godless world, there is no such thing as altruism of any kind,

only moral anarchy. Yet because God does exist in all of us, we have a choice. We can choose to do what is right rather than what is wrong. The reason the whole civilized world is helping is that all of us, Christians, Jews, Muslims, and Buddhists, have been conditioned by our belief in God not to look the other way. Because of our great dependence on science, we assume that humanity should have the means to deal with any catastrophe. But God shows us that isn't necessarily so. God is not a great ring-master in the sky who decides who lives or who dies. God has nothing to do with tectonic plates moving suddenly. He shares our joys and sorrows, and when events like the tsunami challenge our Christian faith, it actually deepens our belief in Him. This is why Jesus suffered the fate He did: to prove to us once and for all not to be content with a lazy faith. When things are going well, we are all happy believers in God. The moment something goes wrong, we challenge His existence.

If one reads history, one knows that those Christians who did the most for the present world were those who thought most of the next—the Apostles, the English evangelicals who abolished the slave trade, even the men who split the atom. Nonbelievers who repudiate the idea of God corrode our culture and detach us from a profound understanding of life and its meaning.

When King Xerxes had his minions whip the sea after he failed to bridge the Hellespont, he was admitting the existence of God. His power was beyond the scope of kings.

Poor Paris Hilton. She appears to value nothing except publicity, to think of nothing beyond momentary pleasure. But God is within her as sure as he is in all of us. ■



WINSTON S. CHURCHILL  
THE SECOND WORLD WAR  
1  
THE GATHERING STORM

WINSTON S. CHURCHILL  
THE SECOND WORLD WAR  
2  
THEIR FINEST HOUR

WINSTON S. CHURCHILL  
THE SECOND WORLD WAR  
3  
THE GRAND ALLIANCE

WINSTON S. CHURCHILL  
THE SECOND WORLD WAR  
4  
THE HINGE OF FATE

WINSTON S. CHURCHILL  
THE SECOND WORLD WAR  
5  
CLOSING THE RING

WINSTON S. CHURCHILL  
THE SECOND WORLD WAR  
6  
TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY



## THE SECOND WORLD WAR

A SIX VOLUME SET BY WINSTON CHURCHILL

Yours for only  
**\$19.95**  
(shipping is FREE)

'Seldom has such power been so effectively concentrated, in the hands of one man, and of a man who can write so well'

*The Economist*

Worth  
**\$350**

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL turned his experiences as Britain's inspirational leader during the Second World War into the finest, most readable history we have of the conflict. Using the directives, telegrams and minutes he kept at the time as his primary sources Churchill gives a fascinating insight into how he shaped the war on a day-to-day basis – we see his first-hand reactions to momentous events, as he co-ordinates land, sea and air strategy and nurtures remarkable relationships with his Allied counterparts – as well as revealing, from Nazi records, Hitler's thinking at crucial moments.

The Folio Society is proud to publish an edition which does justice to this masterpiece of historical writing. Handsomely bound and slip-

cased, it is illustrated throughout with period photographs from the Imperial War Museum. And as your introduction to The Folio Society, we are offering you this special edition (published at \$350) for just \$19.95 (including shipping & handling).

Plus, if you reply within two weeks, we shall also send you a FREE copy of *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* – which is yours to keep whatever you decide about joining.

The Folio Society does NOT send you unsolicited books or 'choices of the month'. You simply choose four books from our catalogue to fulfill your membership.

Our current publications include history and eye-witness accounts, classic and modern fiction,

notable biographies, memoirs, children's books, humour, and legend. Prices start as low as \$34.95 and many of our books are less than \$45.00.

The Folio Society, established in England in 1947, publishes books for dedicated readers who wish to rediscover the pleasure of the fine edition at an affordable price.

Why not join us now with *The Second World War*? Simply fill out and return the coupon today to take advantage of this special introductory offer or call Toll Free (24 hours) on 1-800-353-0700.

**THE FOLIO SOCIETY**  
P.O. Box 693, Holmes, PA 19043

### The Folio Society Promise

You will **never** be sent a book you have not ordered.

**Yours FREE**  
just for replying  
*The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*  
NEW EDITION  
**Worth \$45.00**

To: The Membership Secretary, The Folio Society Ltd.,  
P.O. Box 693, Holmes, PA 19043. Fax: 1-610-532-9001.

**ORDER TOLL FREE 1-800-353-0700**

Please accept my application for FREE trial membership of The Folio Society and send me *The Second World War*, together with the Folio catalogue and my FREE copy of *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. If I agree to purchase at least 4 books from your catalogue I will be billed only \$19.95 for *The Second World War* (including shipping and handling). If I am not satisfied – for any reason – I may return the introductory set within 10 days. My membership will be cancelled and I will owe nothing. I understand that as a member of The Folio Society I have the right to return any book if I am not completely satisfied. *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* is mine to keep whatever I decide.

Title	Name	Date
BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE		
Address		
City		
State	Zipcode	

Please allow 21 days for delivery. Applications subject to approval.

BJ5XN0

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED